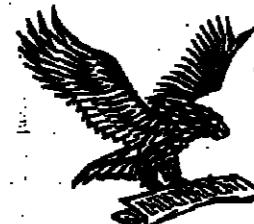


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THE INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 1998

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INSIDE TODAY'S BROADSHEET REVIEW

EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT



Back to school after the carnage



The verdict on Spielberg's Private Ryan



Does your child read enough?

Blair faces defeat by left rebels

BY ANDREW GRICE
AND PAUL WAUGH

TONY BLAIR is heading for an embarrassing defeat at Labour's annual conference later this month, with left-wingers set for victory in elections to the party's national executive committee.

Figures compiled at Labour's Millbank headquarters suggest that left-wingers will capture four of the six seats representing constituency parties on the NEC, with Blair loyalists winning just two.

Those set to win election include Liz Davies, the former Islington councillor vetoed by the Labour leadership as the party's general election candidate in Leeds North East because of her hard-left views.

The looming soub to Mr Blair emerged as Tom Sawyer, Labour's general secretary, appealed to the Prime Minister to tackle, in his keynote speech to the Blackpool conference, the perception he has become "a bit detached" from his own party.

In an interview with *The Independent*, Mr Sawyer urged the Labour leader to answer allegations of "cynicism" by rejecting claims by the former lobbyist Derek Draper that there were "17 people who count" in the Government, including several of Mr Blair's backroom advisers.

Mr Sawyer said Labour members "want to be reassured that the most important people in the party are its elected representatives, its MPs, members of the Cabinet, people who the rank-and-file members put their trust in to work with Tony Blair and support Tony Blair". And he added: "They don't want to see a broad

range of hangers-on who it is alleged have more influence than the elected representatives."

Labour sources say many of the party's 385,000 members are reluctant to support all the candidates running on a pro-Blair ticket in the NEC elections. They do not believe the Prime Minister should have a monopoly on the party's ruling body and want to elect "some people with different views".

Some insiders believe that the leadership, which has launched repeated attacks on the left-wing candidates, has made a tactical mistake by turning the NEC elections into a "trial of strength" that Mr Blair cannot win.

According to estimates by officials at Labour headquarters, left-wingers are set to top the poll. In first place at present is Mark Seddon, editor of *Tribune* newspaper, with Cathy Jamieson, a left-wing member of Labour's Scottish executive, running second. Also on course for election are Ms Davies and Pete Willsman, both put forward by the Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance.

The only two candidates running on the Blairite Members First ticket who look likely to win are Michael Cashman, the actor and gay rights campaigner, and Diana Jenda, an activist with the shopworkers' union Utdaw, who has served on the NEC for 11 years.

Mr Blair's allies admit privately they are gloomy about

the moderates' prospects. Supporters say they are meeting strong resistance when they appeal to members to "vote for Tony Blair". One admitted: "They don't see what's wrong with letting democracy take its course and why he always wants to have it all his own way."

In a speech last night, Mr Blair insisted that "a strong party is essential to a strong government". And he told critics that his reforms to the party's policy-making machinery would "forever stay the dragon of Labour disunity".

But the Prime Minister is facing another setback today, with a warning of the likelihood of industrial unrest this winter.

John Edmonds, leader of the GMB general union and this year's TUC president, says the clampdown on public-sector pay is "hurting people" and warns that strike action would make a mess of the aim for high-quality education and other services.

He told *New Statesman* magazine: "It really does look as if we are heading towards big trouble and it's going to be very disruptive for everybody. We are not looking for a fight, but the members feel they are being pushed into a corner."

Mr Edmonds praised Mr Blair and Peter Mandelson, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, but criticised Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and his spin doctors. "We have had a problem with Gordon. Every time he has met us, we've suffered from an extended spinning period in advance when the world at large has been told that what we were going to say to him was rubbish," Mr Edmonds said.

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Mr Blair's allies admit privately they are gloomy about

A Manchester United poster with 'heart' changed to 'heartless' of England, evokes support from a disgruntled fan

Martin Rickett

Inquiry may stall Murdoch bid

BY PETER THAL LARSEN
AND STEVE BOGGAN

RUPERT MURDOCH's £350m takeover of Manchester United is likely to face a series of investigations which could delay the sale for up to a year.

City analysts believe the mass protests of United fans, coupled with objections from other media and sporting companies, will make it inevitable that the Office of Fair Trading will recommend a monopoly investigation into the world's biggest-ever sports deal.

This puts Peter Mandelson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, on the spot because he will have to decide whether to accept any OFT recommendation to refer.

He is a close friend of Mr Murdoch's daughter, Elisabeth, general manager of BSkyB. And Mr Mandelson, Tony Blair and other senior Labour figures, spent years wooing the media tycoon to support the party.

In the City, analysts said the pressure on the Trade and Industry Secretary would be irresistible. Tom Usher, an expert in competition law at S.J. Berwin, said: "The OFT is looking at what is best for the consumer and they will have a significant body of complaint. My view is that it is more likely than not to be referred."

The last time Mr Murdoch faced the threat of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation, in the early Eighties over his takeover of

Times Newspapers, the then Conservative government decided against a referral.

Confirmation of the takeover sent United shares soaring to 211p on the London stock market, up from an opening price of 200p. At the close of business, however, they settled at 215p, still below the offer price of about 240p, following concerns about an MMC referral.

A DTI spokesman said the takeover would be considered by the Department in about four to six weeks and a decision on whether to refer it to the MMC could come within weeks.

It emerged last night that

Martin Edwards, the Manchester United chairman, had been prepared to sell to BSkyB at 217p a share but Greg Dyke, a director of the club and of Pearson Television, held out for 240p - an increase in the value of the club of more than 25%.

Sources close to the deal said: "Greg held out until the very end but in the end he went

along with it but only having registered his disapproval."

The United board felt the wrath of the club's fans when hundreds protested against the takeover at last night's home game against Charlton.

Earlier in the day United and

BSkyB issued an open letter to fans signed by Mark Booth, chief executive of BSkyB, and Mr Edwards. BSkyB appreciates that this is a club with a phenomenal heritage, and the most passionate fans in the world," they said. "It is not just another business, it is part of the cultural fabric of Manchester and the nation."

Mr Edwards added: "What we have done today will secure a safe future and a prosperous future for the club. I am not about to do anything that destroys the health and tradition of this club. If I do, I deserve to be struck up."

But Andy Walsh, chairman of the Independent Manchester United Supporters Association, said: "If the club has to be sold we would prefer that it was sold to someone who has some sense for football and preferably a sense of Manchester United."

People's game 'dead', page 2

Hatching of the plot, page 3

City applauds deal, page 16

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Clinton says he's sorry, yet again

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
AND PHIL DAVISON

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON apologised for the effects of his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky again yesterday, this time to Democratic colleagues in Congress. Even as he spoke, rules for his impeachment were being laid ahead of the arrival of the report from Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel.

At an emotional breakfast meeting at the White House, the President sought to explain himself to Democrats

understand the deep, deep pain that he feels personally," he said. Members of the President's party have been highly critical of him. On his first trip out of Washington since his return from Ireland, to a school in Orlando, Florida, he was met by a crowd of about 200, some waving placards reading "Resign, you swine".

An earlier apology during the President's Irish trip made little impact and he may use another forum to make a more complete explanation, perhaps at a prayer meeting tomorrow.

But while the President tries to turn the tables on his critics, the legal machine that would take him to trial is being fine-tuned.

Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, met his Democrat counterpart, Richard Gephardt, yesterday to lay rules for how Congress will handle the Starr report, ex-

pected any day. A key issue is when, and how, it will be published.

Impeachment hearings would be handled by the House Judiciary Committee, whose chairman, the Republican Henry Hyde, yesterday reflected on the task: "This is a lousy job but somebody has to do it. Nobody looks forward to this traumatic journey we are embarking on."

Impeachment risk, page 13



Clinton: Crowd in Florida

said he was a 'swine'

Fertility clinic offers 'no baby, no fee' deal

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

A TESTTUBE baby clinic is offering infertile couples a guaranteed baby for a fee of almost £10,000 of their money back.

The Exeter Fertility Clinic is the first in Britain to offer the "no baby, no fee" scheme. Couples would be asked to pay £9,800 in advance and would receive up to 10 treatment cycles. If no baby was delivered, they would get a

full refund. The offer does not include the cost of drugs, which averages £55 per cycle.

Only couples where the woman was under 40 and who had been screened to ensure there were no serious medical problems would be accepted.

The scheme was criticised yesterday by Child, the infertility pressure group, which accused the clinic of "cherry picking" those couples most likely to get pregnant. Clare Brown, director of the group, said: "The way such commercial elements creep into infertility treatment is very worrying."

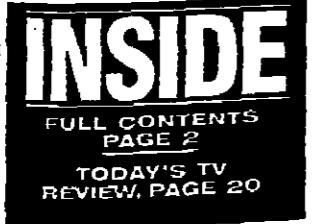
Peter Brinsford, medical director of the Bourn Hall clinic in Cambridgeshire, said he had considered such a scheme but rejected it as too commercial.

In the United States the "no baby, no fee" principle is well established. A common technique there is to replace eight or ten embryos per cycle. In Britain, only three embryos can be replaced at a time.

In publicity material, the Exeter clinic explains that "pregnancy may occur after just one or two treatments, in

which case the couple would have spent more than otherwise would have been the case. On the other hand they would at least have their baby."

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, which licences clinics in the UK, said clinics were free to make whatever arrangements for payment they chose.



HOME
Video evidence shows two Britons held hostage in Chechnya are still alive

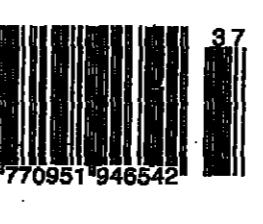
HOME
The Royal Opera will shut for the whole of next year to try to stave off bankruptcy

FOREIGN
A Chinese dissident was dragged away after trying to meet Mary Robinson

BUSINESS
Credit Suisse First Boston has revealed its exposure to Russia as \$2.2bn

SPORT
Vince Wells hit an unbeaten 140 as Leicestershire made 301 against Essex

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Estuary English is talk of nation

The English language is being overwhelmed by a tide of "Estuary English" - whose spread can clearly be heard in the accents of Diana, Princess of Wales, Prince Charles and the Queen.

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Thousands given wrong grades

Up to 70,000 teenagers have been given the wrong GCSE results because of a computer error.

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Calls for EU sanctions on Burma

Britain is pressing for tougher EU sanctions against Burma, in response to the massive new crackdown by the military regime in Rangoon.

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Few power users set to switch

Only 10 per cent of households are forecast to switch electricity supplier when the market is opened to competition from next week.

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McGwire breaks baseball record

Mark McGwire passed the most celebrated landmark in American sport when he broke the record for the number of home runs scored in a baseball season. Page 24

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20-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

David Aaronovitch

"Would it be a sign of strength if politicians and we of the press began to treat the electorate as though they were adults?"

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Geoffrey Wheatcroft

"Thatcherite philistines who sneer at the whole idea of subsidising pools to prance on stage are more honest than lefty luvvies."

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NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT
RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.2% of
the raw material for UK newspapers
in the first half of 1996

People's game is dead, say opponents

BY GARY FINN
AND ADAM SZTERER

THERE WAS widespread anger and concern at the Manchester United takeover deal yesterday. Former players, business leaders and politicians all voiced their worries for the future of football and fears for the control that could now be exercised by Rupert Murdoch.

The Irish Prime Minister and United supporter, Bertie Ahern, said: "I am not that happy about it. Neither was I happy in 1991 when the club went on to the stock market, because I think all of this just drives sports into big business."

Whatever sport it is, I think it is a pity that it gets into the area of rights change," he said.

"We can all see what influence television already has on the game and I think it would be a threat to the game if there was more heavy involvement with media in other clubs."

Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, said: "The other Premier League clubs now are going to have to come together to try to preserve what competitive element there still is in the Premier League."

Lord Hollick, the Labour peer and chief executive of United News & Media, said: "It's a coming together of the monopoly supplier of pay and subscription television in the UK with what Murdoch himself called the 'battering ram' of sport."

David Mellor, chairman of the Football Task Force, said: "The purchase of the club by the Murdoch empire creates intolerable conflicts of interest. It makes the case for a special regulator for football even more compelling."

Chris Akers, chief executive of Sporting Leagues, the media group which runs Leeds United, said the United deal came as no surprise. "I'm no fan of Rupert Murdoch but it is a good deal," he said.

"It does not really pose a threat to the game if you look at the Articles of Association to the Premier League. It will still be one club one-vote. I do not see Sky's involvement as being prohibitive."



David Mellor
"The purchase by the Murdoch empire creates intolerable conflicts of interest, making the case for a regulator even more compelling"



Gordon Taylor
"The other Premier League clubs now are going to have to come together to try to preserve what competitive element there still is"



Arsene Wenger
"We can see what influence TV already has on the game ... it would be a threat if there was more heavy media involvement in other clubs"



Sir Tom Finney
"We think we have reached the peak of transfer fees, but it is going to go further. United will be able to buy all the Ronaldos they want"



Bertie Ahern
"I can do nothing about what happens in the UK ... but it makes me more determined to advance laws to protect our sporting events"



Chris Akers
"It's a good deal. It does not pose a threat to the game if you look at the Articles of Association of the League. It will still be one club one-vote"

All credit, 'The Sun' done well for the boss

BY JANE ROBINS
Media Correspondent

"THE SUN has gone completely overboard this time." The comment on the Murdoch-owned newspaper's unrelenting campaign supporting the Manchester United takeover came not from its arch-rival *The Mirror*, but from an insider at the paper. When *The Sun's* News International stablemate, *The Times*, the paper

"I can do nothing about what happens in the laws, the former Manchester United manager Tommy Docherty was praising Mr Murdoch's "fantastic business coup".

Readers were told that Manchester United would be able to buy the "greatest players on the planet". Brazil's Ronaldo was one option, Italy's Vieri another, and Argentina's Ortega was "just the sort of player Ferrie could afford".

Throughout the week, big names have been selectively quoted and presented as enthusiastic supporters of Mr Murdoch. While ordinary fans were "buzzing with excite-

ment" at the news, the former Manchester United manager Tommy Docherty was praising Mr Murdoch's "fantastic business coup".

The team manager, Alex Ferguson, said Sky had done a "fantastic job" for football, while Ron Atkinson, another former manager, declared that Ferguson would now "have the financial clout to dominate the superstar market".

The Times has kept its digi-

tionally with straight news reporting. "We object to being tarred as Murdoch's tool," said one insider. But despite its protests about *The Sun*, much of *The Times'* other coverage

has been unashamedly helpful to its proprietor.

It has consistently failed to carry a leader on the subject, which would be odd for any non-Murdoch paper, and it has produced pro-Murdoch opinion on the sports pages that critics have found overly gushing.

"Being the line is something that does not need to be enforced," said a senior editor. "We've done it so many times that it just comes naturally."

Fans objections came in a moment of irrational panic caused by the fear of change", the paper said on Monday. And by Wednesday, when others were suggesting that the Sports

minister, Tony Banks, might resign if the Murdoch deal was supported by Government, *The Times* was referring to "hypocritical opposition that has been voiced by the politicians".

The Sun has also taken the opportunity to rekindle hostilities with *The Mirror*, and its editor, Piers Morgan. A *Sun* editorial declared: "One paper, edited by an immature joker with a somewhat limited future in journalism, portrayed him [Murdoch] as a red devil ... Anyone who thinks *The Sun* will now be biased in favour of Manchester United is either brain dead, or the jealous editor of a rival paper."

"It's just the way it is," said a Sun journalist. "Rupert

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It's just the



Martin Edwards, chief executive of Manchester United football club, at a press conference yesterday announcing that the board of the football club had accepted the multi-million pound takeover offer by BSkyB AP

'Murdoch Utd' plot hatched in Italy

BY PETER THAL LARSEN
AND PAUL McCANN

RUPERT MURDOCH's plans to take control of a British football club were hatched after a meeting with Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian media mogul and one-time Italian prime minister, earlier this year.

Mr Berlusconi told Mr Murdoch, who visited Italy in the Spring, of the immense bargaining power that football clubs can wield if they control their own television rights. In Italy a small group of top clubs – including Juventus and AC Milan, the club owned by Mr Berlusconi – have negotiated a lucrative television deal with Telesp, its pay-TV operator.

Returning from Italy, Mr Murdoch telephoned Mark Booth, the chief executive of British Sky Broadcasting, and told him that BSkyB needed to buy a football club if it was to hang on to the television rights to key matches.

The next move was for Booth, BSkyB's new American chief executive, to meet Manchester United's chief executive, Martin Edwards. Booth, 41, is a long-time Murdoch man who joined BSkyB from its Japanese sister company in January. It was a meeting at his West London office on a rainy day in June that set Project Moore under way – the name Moore (after Bobby Moore, captain of England's 1966 World Cup-winning team) was chosen as a codename to throw the scent of Manchester United. "Project Bobby Charlton would have been a bit obvious," said one banking source last night.

Edwards, United's chief executive and largest shareholder,



Ryan Giggs and David Beckham, United's star assets

er was in Sky's offices for one of the broadcaster's regular meetings with the head of Premier League teams. After discussing the future of televised football Booth made his offer: "I'll buy you out".

Edwards, who had been running Manchester United for more than 30 years, was known to be keen to sell the business.

It was no secret that Edwards was looking to cash in his 14 per cent share in the club. He was willing to sell the whole club for £20m in 1989 and has reportedly already made £30m from selling blocks of his United shares. Last year, he turned down an offer for the club from VCI, the video production group chaired by former Channel 4 boss Michael Grade.

For the rest of June and July Edwards and Booth negotiated face-to-face. A tiny team of advisers, including Peter Kenyon, United's deputy chief executive, and Martin Stewart, BSkyB's chief financial officer, knew of the talks.

In August, the negotiating teams grew larger and BSkyB brought in its bankers, Goldman Sachs, while Manchester

United turned to HSBC and Merrill Lynch.

Negotiations came to a head last week, when BSkyB tabled a bid which valued Manchester United shares at 217p. Although Mr Edwards and Professor Sir Roland Smith, the club's chairman, were keen to accept the idea, it is thought that Greg Dyke, the former London Weekend Television boss, who is a non-executive director of Manchester United, convinced them to hold off for more.

Dyke, a lifelong United fan, argued that the club was one of the few in Britain big enough to survive on its own. He also believed that football teams had been undervalued by the City for the last two years. If the club waited a couple of years, it could get a much better price.

After news of the talks leaked on Sunday, unleashing a storm of protest from fans and politicians, negotiations became more urgent.

Manchester United's financial advisers told BSkyB's bankers, Goldman Sachs, that the offer undervalued the potential revenues from pay-per-view football matches once

At present the division of television money between Premiership clubs is based on a three-part formula. Last year every club got a basic £5m. Then each got a facility fee that was paid according to the number of times the BBC or Sky Sports screened one of its games. On top of this, there was a merit award based on a club's league position at the end of the season.

This formula is only indirectly related to the ratings figures for matches. Rupert Murdoch has bought Manchester United for the simple reason that pay per view television will make the relationship between money earned and the number of armchair fans an absolutely direct one.

The arrival of digital televi-

sion offers both a threat and an opportunity. The threat is that with a massive digital spectrum anyone can become a broadcaster. The distribution system becomes less important. Instead owning the content of the broadcasts becomes important – which is precisely how Mr Murdoch sees Manchester United, not as a 120-year old football club, but as television "content", just like his Twentieth Century Fox film studio.

How quickly pay per view arrives depends on the Restrictive Practices Court. It meets in January to decide whether the Premier League's sale of television rights to BSkyB amounts to a cartel. If it tears up the current Premier League-BSkyB contract, Murdoch is protected because Man-

chester United will quickly be in the position to sell its games on a subscription or pay per view basis – whatever it thinks it can get away with.

It is more likely that the court will tinker with the Premiership television contract, but leave it largely intact until 2001 when it expires. And that when Manchester United will be worth its £23m – and potentially much more.

It will give Murdoch a strong negotiating position for the next television deal when all teams will be looking to exploit pay per view.

Not only does BSkyB's contract with the Premiership expire, but so too does a £100m contract currently held by the sports agents IMG and French media giant Canal+ to sell the

rights to Premiership games outside the UK.

With his Star satellite system in Asia and his share in El Globe, the South American satellite, Murdoch is in a perfect position to extend the pay per viewer all around the globe.

And Manchester United is the perfect team to use to create the global electronic stadium. The official fan club has 200 branches and 140,000 members. It is the most recognised sporting brand in the world and its Supporters' Association claims 100 million members worldwide. Either as a 'hitting ram' to grow his satellite services, or as a pay-per-view earner, if Manchester United has fans, Murdoch's satellites can reach them and charge them for watching.

Butcher who cleaved fortune from football

BY KATHY MARKS

MARTIN EDWARDS, chairman and chief executive of Manchester United, was born with a silver meat cleaver in his mouth and went on to inherit the crown jewels of football.

The family's ownership of large chunks of United goes back nearly four decades. Martin's father, Louis, a flamboyant, millionaire butcher, became a director in 1958, the day after the Munich air crash wiped out half of the "Busby Babes" team.

Thanks to the deal with Rupert Murdoch, Martin Edwards, 52, is one of the most unpopular men in Britain. But he has long been vilified by the club's supporters, who claim he has no great love of the game and occupies a different planet from most fans.

Such criticism is rejected by Mr Edwards, who went to his first Old Trafford match when he was seven and still has the programme to prove it.

He also dismisses the idea that he was handed the team on a plate, saying he was already



a major shareholder when Louis died in 1980, bequeathing him the stake that gave him overall control.

But it is difficult for Mr Edwards to dispute that he received a leg up. Having gone into the family meat trade straight from public school, he was given a seat on the United board by his father at the age of 24 – an attempt by Louis to seduce him away from a career in rugby, he says.

Certainly, the club has been

Sixties. Louis died soon after a Granada TV documentary alleged that he gained control in a series of unorthodox share deals involving large cash payments and irregular documentation.

Martin, who was never the subject of any allegations, worked for the family firm for 16 years. He likes to tell that he began right at the bottom, hacking meat on the butcher's block and selling pasties and pies from a van.

At the United helm, he was pilloried for two previous attempts to sell the club. He presided over the flotation in 1991 and has accumulated about £20 million since then by selling off shares.

Edwards lives with his wife, Sue, in Wilmslow, Cheshire, which is millionaire territory, and is famously publicly shy. Lurid tabloid stories linking him with a series of young women have tried his patience in recent years.

But the current crop of front and back-page stories probably take the biscuit.

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Chechen hostages show the strain

BY LOUISE JURY

THE FAMILIES of two Britons held hostage in Chechnya welcomed video evidence yesterday that the pair were still alive, but said they feared the publicity might put their lives at risk.

The Russian government's decision to release the two-minute footage could raise the stakes and make it more difficult to secure the couple's release, the families said.

The video showed Camilla Carr, 40, from Bath, and Jon James, 38, from Lydney, Gloucestershire, in reasonable health. But the strains of having spent more than a year in captivity were clear. They appeared thin and although Ms Carr spoke with some spirit, Mr James appeared more unhappy.

The two-minute video was the second to show them alive. In it, the couple said they had received some post sent from home. Mr James said he hoped it would be over soon as he did not know how much longer he could stay sane. Ms Carr added: "But we will."

Raj Carr, Ms Carr's brother, said the video, which came several months after earlier footage of the couple, had been a "great shock".

"[Jon and Camilla] certainly look healthy - we know fairly well that most of the other hostages were well fed. But psychological scars you can't see on video..."

"It's the kind of coverage we didn't want because it kind of ups the stakes. It's a great shock that it's suddenly been lifted into the international arena," he added.

THE OTHER CAPTIVES

THREE OTHER Britons are held hostage abroad. Keith Mangan and Paul Wells were seized in Kashmir in July 1998, while John Kear, who has dual British-New Zealand nationality, was captured in the Democratic Republic of Congo last month.

It also brought back the fact that they are not here. Now I just hope things get moving."

Rod Tockwell, a family friend, said the footage raised some important questions. "If they can get mail from home there must be a path to them. Someone must know where they are," he said.

"I hope this video will be the start of some sort of movement and not a one-off incident. But it was wonderful to see and hear them."

Secret payments of up to \$400,000 are believed to have secured the release of hostages of other nationalities in Chechnya. The James and Carr families have received ransom demands, although none which clearly came from the captors. Even if they had the money, the families oppose ransom payments.

It was unclear yesterday how the footage came into the hands of Alexei Mitrofanov, the chairman of the Russian government's committee on geopolitics who took the decision to hold a press conference and to show the video.

A Foreign Office spokesman said it was very encouraged to have recent evidence that the couple were alive and together.

"As soon as we got a copy of the footage we showed it to the two families. We are always working around the clock in our efforts in this case and we shall continue to do so."

Islamic fundamentalists are often blamed for tensions in the region, but Raj Carr said it was the billion dollar potential of oil under the Caspian Sea that was the key, as gangs fought for control of transportation routes.

But if the problems of Chechnya were brought to world attention it might not be a bad development, Mr Carr said. "The international community should be doing something about the situation there. It's appalling."

Jon James and Camilla Carr were snatched by gunmen in July last year while working at a children's home in the breakaway state of the former Soviet Union.

Doris James, Mr James's mother, said she had mixed emotions as she watched the video, which was dated 24 August.

"It was good to see them, but



Camilla Carr and Jon James on the video shown to their families; the two Britons have been held in Chechnya since July last year BBC TV

Wives of straying academics form support group

A SUPPORT group for wives whose husbands in academia have deserted them for students has been set up on the Internet. It was created by Jean Norris, whose husband, a social science lecturer at Southampton Institute, had relationships with more than one student. She said the response had been "enormous".

By JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Her story is told in today's education section of *The Independent*. Mrs Norris will not say how many people have contacted her since the group was established on the Internet 10 days ago but she said: "It is common for academic men to

have affairs with female students. I know that it's rife. It's endemic in universities and colleges. But they won't address it."

Students who have had affairs with academics and those who have witnessed staff-student relationships have also been in touch.

One person who contacted

Mrs Norris said they were penalised and intimidated by the academic hierarchy when they tried to bring an affair out into the open.

Both the lecturers' unions have codes of conduct that cover the issue of affairs between dons and students. The Association of University Teachers says that such rela-

tionships raise questions of conflict of interests and may mean that students are not treated equally.

Paul Norris was disciplined

by his managers at Southampton Institute six years ago for having an affair. Mrs Norris has named a second student in her divorce action.

The institute has rules that

prevent lecturers supervising a student with whom they are having a relationship and which say that any affairs must be declared to heads of department.

Lawyers are understood to have told the institute that Mrs Norris' behaviour did not provide grounds for dismissal.

Mr Norris said that he did not begin his latest relationship

with a student, a 21-year-old, until June last year after he had left his wife.

The dean was informed. I had nothing to do with the student's work. All her course work and examination papers went to the external examiners," he said.

Mrs Norris believes that universities should go further in

disciplining academics who have affairs with students. She wants the lectures to be suspended at once and a formal inquiry whose results will be made public.

The affair should remain permanently on an academic's record, she says.

Higher love is so low,
Education, page 2

IN BRIEF

Brothers accused of 'Mardi Gras' bombings are sent for trial

TWO BROTHERS accused of the "Mardi Gras" bombing and blackmail plot, mainly against branches of Barclays bank and Sainsbury, were yesterday committed for trial at the Old Bailey. Ronald Pearce, 66, and Edgar Pearce, 60, face a total of 20 charges linked with the three-and-a-half-year campaign. The two men were remanded in custody and will reappear at the Old Bailey on October 16.

Police hunt pub landlord's killer
POLICE ARE hunting the killer of a pub landlord found tied up and shot in the back in the cellar of his pub. Tariq Javed Sattar, 35, was found on Tuesday at the Black Bull in Birley, Huddersfield, after what officers believe was a bungled robbery. Mr Sattar was found by the landlord of a neighbouring pub who called when the Black Bull remained closed on Monday and Tuesday.

Straw wants clubs for fathers

MEN SHOULD get together in "dads' clubs" to discuss the problems of raising children, Jack Straw, Home Secretary, said yesterday. He told the Mothers' Union that men were still too "secretive" and unwilling to disclose their emotions, and should set up support networks.

'Free Willy' star sent death threat
SECURITY IS being tightened in Heimaey in the Westman Islands, off Iceland, after a death threat was made yesterday against Keiko the whale, star of the *Free Willy* movie, who is being returned to his native Icelandic waters today. The threat was made in a letter to Iceland's largest daily paper, *Morgunbladid*.

Dolly makes a mark in commercial world

DOLLY THE first cloned sheep, is to become a trademark to prevent her picture being used inappropriately, her creators said yesterday.

The application to register her name was made by the Roslin Institute after Zamussi, the electrical manufacturers, produced an advertisement showing a sheep called Dolly with the caption "The Misapprehension of Science".

Dr Harry Griffin, assistant director at the Edinburgh institute where Dolly was cloned, said the advertisement was derogatory and had incensed scientists.

"It is grossly untrue to suggest as a statement of fact that Dolly is a misapprehension of science," he said. "The science that led to Dolly, he added, would have very large positive benefits for society, particularly in medicine.

"Our technology has already

been used to create sheep that will produce human blood clotting factor in their milk so as to provide new treatments for haemophilia.

In the future, we expect that the same technology will help solve the chronic shortage in organs for transplant. He said that Zamussi was "clearly ignorant" of the reasons behind the cloning.

The company said it had agreed to withdraw the posters "as a goodwill gesture".

A spokeswoman for Zamussi said the poster was part of a £3.5m campaign that was due to run until November.

It showed three different images with the statement: "The Misapprehension of Science". The first was a nuclear mushroom cloud, the second a dead fish in a polluted river, and the third was a sheep called Dolly.

but it was not the cloned animal.

John Kershaw, head of marketing at Zamussi, said the advertisement was meant to provoke debate.

"The application of science has revolutionised the 20th century and brought enormous strides forward in areas like medicine. But we feel it is still important to evaluate the role science should have in everyday life and in the future," he said. "Our advertising is aimed to develop discussion. However, we have decided to withdraw this particular poster in response to concerns expressed by the Roslin Institute because we do not wish to offend them."

The company said it had agreed to withdraw the posters "as a goodwill gesture".

A spokeswoman for Zamussi said the poster was part of a £3.5m campaign that was due to run until November.

It showed three different images with the statement:



Labour expels MP for 'misconduct'

TOMMY GRAHAM was expelled from the Labour Party yesterday for alleged misconduct dating back at least five years.

Mr Graham, 54, MP for Renfrewshire West, said he was "shocked and saddened" at the move, which ends his 33-year party membership, and he intends to challenge it.

The ruling followed a two-day hearing of Labour's National Constitutional Committee in Glasgow in allegations that he had acted in a way prejudicial to the party.

He was suspended from Labour's parliamentary ranks 14 months ago after the suicide of the MP for Paisley South, Gordon McMaster, brought to a head years of in-fighting and allegations of sleaze within Labour ranks in Renfrewshire.

Mr Graham was later accused of smearing Mr McMaster, but remained accused of behaviour detrimental to Labour's interests.

The decision to expel him came after Mr Graham, repre-

senting himself, gave evidence after listening to his accusers for nine hours. He has already said that, if expelled, he intends to continue sitting as an MP and will work to clear his name through the courts.

Details of the five charges against Mr Graham, MP for West Renfrewshire, have not been disclosed, but there is no appeal from a constitutional committee decision.

Large parts of the hearing were taken up with the alleged spreading of a rumour of a gay trade union official.

The photograph's existence has never been confirmed, but a dispute has developed over who was responsible for the rumour.

Jim Devine, election agent to the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and himself a prominent Labour figure, denied he was responsible and said he had gone to the hearing to declare this as it was the only forum open to him to do so.

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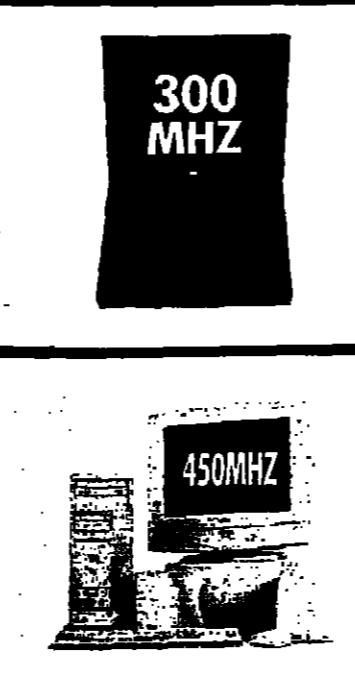
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Opera to shut for year and fire staff

THE ROYAL OPERA will be shut for the whole of next year and staff will be made redundant in a last-ditch attempt to stave off bankruptcy.

But the board, headed by Sir Colin Southgate, is still demanding that the Arts Council give it its £14.4m grant next April, even though the opera company will not give a single performance.

The Royal Opera House has already been given £20m of lottery money to see it through the closure period.

Sir Colin also revealed yesterday, in almost an aside, that even if the ROH were given extra government money it would not be able to run its new 220-seat studio theatre without further private sponsorship. The studio theatre had been hailed as a key part of the £11m redevelopment which would showcase new opera and dance and bring in new audiences.

The public would be able to see it on tours of the building, he said, even though there would be no performances to look at.

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

As critics predicted that privatisation was now inevitable, revealed a package of measures, publicly backed by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to change for ever the way Britain's most troubled cultural institution is run.

Sir Colin said he was determined to modernise it, make it more efficient and bring prices down and that he and the new board were not to blame for the opera house's £12m deficit.

"Don't look at me," he said, "I'm the sucker who took on this poisoned chalice." The opera company chairman, the composer Michael Berkeley, added: "You've been asking us to do something radical. Now we are

ernment came up with yet more public funding.

He also said that when the house did re-open there would be a reduced number of opera and ballet performances to keep within budget, and the unions would have to agree to new working agreements so that there could be more live transmissions.

BUT the leading classical music and opera promoter Raymond Gubbay said last

night: "It's ridiculous that Sir Colin is asking for the full grant. Those funds should be used as a bridge towards privatisation. That is now the only outcome. How can you suddenly change plans in this way when you have been given special sums of money for the closure period? They are not fulfilling their side of the bargain, and the public are losing out."

Dennis Scard, general secretary of the Musicians' Union,

added: "This decision is cultural vandalism on a grand scale, and the notion of a multi-million-pound, newly revamped opera house with a part-time orchestra presenting fewer productions than the old house beggars belief."

Sir Colin told a stunned meeting of staff that they must agree to new working practices or be given notice. Even if they did agree, every member of staff would be re-ap-

praised and, he said, "there will inevitably be redundancies".

Mr Smith said of the rescue plan, intended to save around £5m next year: "The board of the ROH has now taken a real grip on the problems that have beset the institution for too long. These decisions are radical; they represent real reform; they will transform the management of the ROH, and they provide a way forward to a new and sustainable future."

Andrew Buurman

The performers' union Equity said: "The opera singers, who are now facing the sack, have no responsibility for the managerial and financial mess the Royal Opera House now finds itself in."

The Royal Ballet will continue to perform next year but will give fewer performances in Britain than usual.

Leading article,
Geoffrey Wheateroff,
Review, page 3

Now it's Boots the dentist

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

BOOTS THE Chemist is set to become Boots the Dentist under a plan unveiled yesterday. Boots is planning to open six dental practices next year as part of a trial scheme that could see the high street giant expand further into the dentistry market.

The surgeries will offer a mix of private and NHS services and be located in stores or separate high street locations. The move is part of Boots strategy to offer additional health-related services in addition to its chemist business. It already operates Boots the Opticians which has 285 branches. In April it began offering health and travel insurance. Last year Boots announced plans to open six trial doctor's surgeries in conjunction with medical group Sinclair Montrouze. The first two or three should open before Christmas. Boots also began a pilot scheme last year where some stores included service counters advising on skin care, oral hygiene and hair colouring.

"Dentistry in the UK is going through an exciting period of change," said Steve Russell, Boots the Chemists' managing director. "The move is a necessary first step in a programme to explore thoroughly the opportunities in the corporate dentistry market."

The dentistry market is worth £1.9bn a year and grew by 8 per cent last year. Boots needs a capital investment of £3m and revenue expenditure of £1m over the first two years. Boots is paying £250,000 for Wilson's Dentistry which is one of 27 Dental Body Corporates in the UK. These bodies enable companies to operate a number of surgeries outside the usual partnership structure.

Boots strategy to extend to additional health-related services is something some analysts have long championed.



Sir Colin Southgate after addressing the Royal Opera House staff yesterday in Conway Hall, central London

Bristol heart scandal surgeon is dismissed

JANARDAN DHASMANA, one of the surgeons at the centre of the Bristol heart babies scandal, has been sacked, it was announced last night.

A General Medical Council inquiry found Mr Dhasmana guilty of serious professional misconduct over the deaths of

BY MARK WOODS
29 babies at the Bristol Royal Infirmary. Another four babies were left seriously brain damaged after heart surgery.

The other two surgeons involved, James Wisheart and Dr John Roylance, were both

struck off, but Mr Dhasmana was banned from performing heart surgery on children for three years.

A spokeswoman for Bristol Royal Infirmary said: "The United Bristol Healthcare Trust today announced that it had, with regret, terminated the

contract of employment of Mr Janardan Dhasmana. The decision has been made by Hugh Ross, chief executive of the Trust. Mr Dhasmana has the right of appeal against the decision to a panel of non-executive directors of the UBHT.

"In view of Mr Dhasmana's

right of appeal, the trust will make no further comment at this stage."

Maria Shortis, founder of the Bristol Heart Children's Action Group and whose daughter died during surgery at the hospital, was delighted by the news. She said: "What a re-

lief, this is not before time. It is the only decision they could have made. I cannot tell you how relieved I am that he will not be allowed to carry out any more operations."

Malcolm Curnow, of the action group, said: "Under the circumstances we feel this is

wholly appropriate. His position was untenable. But there is nothing to stop him from working at another hospital or setting up at a private clinic. This gives us cause for concern. He should have been struck off by the GMC as the other two doctors involved were."

Wilson's Dentistry which is one of 27 Dental Body Corporates in the UK. These bodies enable companies to operate a number of surgeries outside the usual partnership structure.

Boots strategy to extend to additional health-related services is something some analysts have long championed.

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8/HOME NEWS

Tom Sawyer tells Donald Macintyre of a long, hard battle

How we all fought to end Labour's political corruption

NOBODY CAN accuse Tom Sawyer; when he discusses the complex relationship between the Labour Party and the Blair Government, of not knowing what he is on about. It is hardly surprising that he was Blair's choice four years ago to become the party's general secretary.

He is one of the select few still in British politics who was on the beginning of the Labour Party's long march to electability - long before, for example, Blair himself.

He had been a moderniser before the word had ever been invented. He was the architect of the policy review process through which Neil Kinnock saw off the stances on defence, Europe and party organisation that had plunged the party into its nadir in the early Eighties. Yet he came on to the National Executive Committee in 1981, having enthusiastically helped in the deputy leadership campaign of Tony Benn and remained a reliable member of the left grouping until well after the 1983 election.

Several factors gradually conspired to turn this thoughtful, quiet-spoken man off the Bennites. First, "there'd be left caucuses forming at the NEC and Dennis Skinner told everybody what to do and I didn't find that very comfortable". This reached a low point for Sawyer when in 1984 the left called for a general strike in support of the miners - which Sawyer regarded as "cloud-cuckoo-land".

Of the two "Skinner was the most powerful, I think. I used to think that Tony Benn articulated in middle-class language what Dennis had already said in street language. When he was in full flow he was terrifying. He's not much like that now, he's much more benign. But then he was very difficult to stand up to in argument, especially if you were on the left."

But if Sawyer had a Damascene, it was Militant-run Liverpool. Jane Kennedy, now a Labour MP, was the branch secretary of Nippa in the city and Sawyer had been told that she was on all those people. Arthur Scargill, the London loony comical Militant in Liverpool. He fought it tooth and nail, line by line. It wasn't the "Tony Blair big picture" stuff. Blair's leadership from the party point of view has been a honeymoon compared with Kinnock. I think Blair would accept that."

Sawyer's final act as general secretary has been "Partnership in Power", transforming the policy-making process through continuous forums of party members. He is irritated by the left's caricature of the new look conference, on show for the first time at the end of the month.

"I sat round in a room with about 25 decent people, gardeners, refuse collectors, school caretakers. And I was told about a group of gangsters who were running the council for their own ends, really. And this played out in very real terms for these people because if they wouldn't join the GMB branch 5, which was controlled by Militant, then they were put on onerous shifts."

While Benn, Skinner and their supporters were defending Militant's right to function in the party, Sawyer proposed in the NEC the resolution that eventually led to the purge of Derek Hatton and his allies. It was a highly uncomfortable time for him as he faced charges of betrayal by the Bennite left. "I went out on a limb and I did it because of what I'd seen and I felt I could stand it up. So a lot of people would crudely characterise that as a move to the right but in fact it wasn't. It was a move to honesty and decency away from political corruption."

But it was two years later that he drew up the formal proposal for a far-reaching policy review, which Kinnock approved. "We had to make our selves electable, we had to build ourselves anew." What of the other key modernising figure from that period still playing a big part in British politics? Sawyer had his own line to Kinnock. Peter Mandelson, as the party's director of communications, had his. They were working on essentially parallel tracks.

Sawyer emphatically does not believe in all the mystical qualities routinely attributed to Mandelson. But he says that he was a "brilliant, brilliant operator" with the press and - more controversially - as a "ruthless hit man for the leadership". He also suggests that



Sawyer: Labour must reassure members Brian Harris

Gordon Brown and Mandelson were probably the best "political thinkers" about where we should head".

In the end Kinnock did not win the 1992 election - but Sawyer says: "Despite all his shortcomings, Neil was the man who saved the Labour Party. He was a giant. The man who took on all those people, Arthur Scargill, the London loony comical Militant in Liverpool. He fought it tooth and nail, line by line.

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"Tony Blair is being quite brave. He's opening the policy-making process up to an enormous number of party members, and eventually when we get to the later conferences in the parliamentary cycle there will be real debates. The delegates will decide party policy. So I think it's the opposite to what Tony Blair thinks."

A noticeable gap has opened up between the party and all previous Labour governments - Atlee's, Wilson's, Callaghan's - which Partnership in Power is designed to close.

Sawyer acknowledges there

is a perception that the party has become "a bit detached".

"Tony Blair was on television again recently, saying that we

are turning the Labour Party into a Democratic convention and that it will be all balloons and so on. In fact we are creating an extremely complex, deep and serious policy-making process." Yes, composite resolutions are a thing of the past. But the conference is still free to vote a policy down if it wants.

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"Tony Blair was on television again recently, saying that we

dress that. He's got to explain to the party ... how they've got a role to play in partnership with the Government. All the things that have happened that have given an image that the Government isn't listening, 'Dragnet', lobbyists and all that kind of thing... I don't think they're things of Tony Blair's making but... they affect the way party members think and therefore they have to be addressed.

"When somebody comes up with the 17 most important people in the Labour Party and there's hardly any MPs or cabinet members among them, they want to be reassured that the most important people in the party are its elected representatives, people who the rank-and-file members put their trust in to work with Tony Blair and support Tony Blair. They don't want to see a range of hangers-on who, it is alleged, have more influence than the elected representatives."

Partnership works both ways. Sawyer is careful, as the party's returning officer, not to comment on an NEC ballot that could yet see the ultra-leftist Liz Davies elected. But he is especially well qualified to remember the days when an NEC at war with the party leadership cost it elections. He sees the NEC's real job as one of management - overseeing the party's growth, financial strength and the quality of its representatives.

"NEC members are not expected to be rubber stamps or sycophantic about the leadership but they are supposed to be generally supportive of what the party's trying to do and not create the impression that we're a divided party."

But ministers also have a duty. "The Government goes off and does big macro things like Northern Ireland or whatever but the party is stuck at home facing down-to-earth economic issues like paying the mortgage and keeping the job going. What government has to do is to make sure it talks to the party and keeps it up to date on the progress it's making, and listens to the party on any issues the party feels strongly about."

"The trick that previous Labour governments haven't been able to pull off is to keep that open dialogue with the party at the same time as keeping the big picture intact."

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How green is your trolley?

In Britain's shops and markets, organic food has never been more popular. But the industry itself does not enjoy such rude health. By Richard McClure

There are no takers at the tofu stall. The tattooed couple selling hemp products are not exactly swamped with customers, either. In fact, the Sunday crowds at Spitalfields indoor market, in east London, barely register the health food zealots and marijuana evangelists as they go about their weekly shop.

Over at the stalls selling organic produce, though, it is a very different story. The scrum of people has barely subsided since early morning. Customers come and go clutching bags of Guatemalan coffee beans, Leicestershire mince and other wholesome, nutrition-rich foodstuffs.

Just a few years ago, the organic stallholders would have stood as idle as the tofu traders, their produce equally shunned as fodder for hair-shirted food fascists who haunt Holland & Barrett. Not now, though. The BSE and *E. coli* scares have seen that "For me, there's nothing New Age or cranky about it," says Inga Phipps, a publisher clapping a brace of red peppers. "I grew up in a farming community in Dorset and I know what they do to the animals, and the pesticides they use. I'm certainly not subscribing to the latest food fad. It's simply a matter of eating healthily."

She is not alone. According to a Mintel survey, organic food has shed its associations with "committed activists and vegetarians" and become a staple of the high street. Marks & Spencer has just re-introduced organic items after a hiatus of five years, while Sainsbury's plans to extend its range after a customer survey found a massive demand for pesticide-free food.

It seems we've all gone organic. At least, that's what the figures suggest: an annual UK business of £860m; a domestic market that has doubled since 1995; and a global market likely to increase

tenfold in eight years. It is a wonder we can find any chemical-coated food on the menu at all.

But behind the healthy glow of changing attitudes and upward sales predictions, the organic market is not quite as robust as it seems. Although Mintel reported that three-quarters of customers are "sympathetic" to the idea of buying natural foods, it also found that the produce is bought predominantly by the young, affluent and childless, while almost one-third of us have never even touched the stuff.

"It is definitely a middle-class market," says Thoby Young, whose Fresh Food Company supplies organic fruit and vegetable boxes around the country. "Organic production is spread throughout the UK, but our customers are mainly concentrated in the more prosperous parts of the South-east."

The main stumbling-block to organic's move into the mainstream is

methods more labour-intensive," says Elliott. "It is a better product, but the price is certainly prohibitive for some people - that's partly why the market is still so small."

Elliott, 33, who was born in Mississippi, set up Planet Organic with her business partner Jonathan Dwek in 1995. Catering to a fashionable clientele in Notting Hill, west London, the store was awarded Organic Retailer of the Year in

1997, but plans to open another outlet have so far come to nought. "We hope to open another London store soon," she says, "but research has shown that outside the capital, only towns with the demographics of Windsor or Oxford could sustain a store the size of ours."

At Spitalfields, the luxury nature of organic produce is not disputed.

"We're very lucky in that we can afford to buy it," chorus Sam and Sarah, two dancers who have travelled from south London to stock up for the week. "We realise it's something of an indulgence, but we need to be healthy for our work, so good food is a priority."

its higher price - on average it is between 25 to 50 per cent more expensive than its conventional counterparts. According to the Consumers' Association, one in four people is actively put off by the extra cost, while few supermarkets bother to stock organic food at branches that serve the poorer parts of the country.

Renee Elliott, founder of Planet Organic, Britain's only "natural food supermarket", agrees that the high prices effectively exclude large swathes of the population. "The higher cost to the consumer is justified by growers on the grounds that yields are less reliable and their

1997, but plans to open another outlet have so far come to nought. "We hope to open another London store soon," she says, "but research has shown that outside the capital, only towns with the demographics of Windsor or Oxford could sustain a store the size of ours."

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It is not surprising that Tina felt that her own bereavement was overshadowed by everyone else's. It is obvious that many people who were apparently grieving for Diana were in fact grieving for their own personal losses in the past, and Tina was deprived of one of the only perks of bereavement - that of feeling special. Normally, when you are bereaved everyone's attitude to you changes; you are treated with kid gloves and cared for like a china doll.

Tina must have missed a lot on the same day as Diana and very few people came to the funeral, as it was also

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Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, who wants to be mayor of London, being made an honorary pearly king in Lambeth yesterday in recognition of the millions he has raised for charity over 20 years

Thousands given wrong GCSE grade

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

BETWEEN SIX and seven thousand teenagers have been given the wrong GCSE results because of a computer error.

The mistake means that the pupils, who sat science or humanities modular exams with the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board, could now receive higher grades.

New results will be issued tomorrow. The board said that no one would receive a poorer grade but some might receive one grade higher than their original mark.

Peter Dawson, the board's assistant chief executive, said the errors came to light when appeals against the results started to come in from schools.

The exams in question have three components: coursework, tests for modules throughout the course and final, externally marked tests worth a quarter of the total marks.

Problems arose because new software introduced this year did not aggregate the test scores properly.

Mr Dawson said: "There was nothing at all wrong with the marking. It was a computer error."

No more than 5 per cent of the 130,000 candidates who took the exams are expected to be affected.

One school involved is the Ridings School in Halifax. Anna White, the head who took over after the school closed during a discipline crisis two years ago, said she was surprised by the results of some able pupils.

"We knew there was something wrong and we were prepared to put our necks out and do something about it."

"The pupils don't expect the

exam boards to make a mistake and it has been quite a traumatic time for the school and for the science staff."

Record numbers of A-level candidates have applied to university after receiving their results despite the introduction of £1,000-a-year tuition fees, figures released yesterday by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) show.

The figure for last-minute applications through the clearing process, which matches applicants to unfilled university places, is even higher than last year when students rushed to join courses to avoid paying fees this autumn.

Yesterday's figures also show that the number of Malaysian applicants has more than halved after the fall in value of the Malaysian currency and the removal of tax relief for parents sending children overseas.

The president of Oxford University students' union has been expelled for allegedly cheating in her exams.

Katherine Rainwood, 22, who read politics, philosophy and economics at St Hilda's College, is understood to be preparing to appeal against the decision. She was elected president on a "Labour students against tuition fees" slate.

Blunkett praises his own work

BY JUDITH JUDD

spending an extra 5.1 per cent on education in real terms over the next three years.

He looks forward to the publication of a Green Paper on the profession later this year. "This will recognise the vital role of teachers and offer an historic opportunity to put an end to 20 years of drift and declining morale. It will set out our vision of a profession equipped to meet the demands of the 21st century and ready to reclaim its rightful status in society."

But heads and teachers said yesterday that the jury was still out on the effect of the reforms introduced since the Government took office.

And they warned that higher salaries for teachers and more money for schools, not a succession of headline-grabbing initiatives, were the key to raising standards. The Conservatives said the letter was "an expensive gimmick".

The Department for Education said originally that a letter was being sent to every teacher; but later admitted that letters had gone to head teachers with a request that the message be passed on.

Schools face a series of changes this academic year. They include testing for all five-year-olds, a "literacy hour" to improve reading and education action zones to raise standards in underachieving schools. A new teacher-training curriculum for primary teachers is also in place and next week sees the start of the National Year of Reading.

Mr Blunkett, who announced a further £560m over three years, to reduce infant class sizes, says that there are 100,000 fewer infants in classes of under 30 this term. Overall, he says, the Government is

"I have no doubt that they have a part to play, but the bottom line is, 'Have we got teachers of the right quality in the classroom and heads with the right leadership skills?'"

John Dunford, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said: "In terms of the feel-good factor, a personal letter from the Secretary of State is helpful but you still have to feel that the extra money is actually getting into your classroom. That isn't the case in all schools."

Damian Green, Tory education spokesman, said: "This is another example of the money-wasting tendencies of the Government's army of spin doctors."

BSE inquiry told of ministry error

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

MOVES TO introduce a computerised registry of British cattle seven years ago were blocked by the Ministry of Agriculture, even though it could have shortened the BSE epidemic and helped to track diseased cattle, a former civil servant disclosed yesterday.

Paul Bunyan, who was chief scientific adviser at the ministry, told the BSE inquiry in London that in February 1991 he backed moves to introduce a National Cattle Data Centre, which would have recorded cattle ancestry, milk yields and any genetic servant disclosed yesterday.

Paul Bunyan, who was chief scientific adviser at the ministry, told the BSE inquiry in London that in February 1991 he backed moves to introduce a National Cattle Data Centre, which would have recorded cattle ancestry, milk yields and any genetic

Such a system would have simplified the problem of finding the calves of cattle that subsequently developed "mad cow disease". Tracking down such cattle has been a key aim of the culling procedures suggested to curb BSE. But without computerised records, it is a hit-and-miss affair.

The approach was subsequently adopted in Northern Ireland, with demonstrable recent benefit to their export trade." Mr Bunyan told the inquiry. The Ulster system played a key part in winning the confidence of the European Union that the province was BSE-free earlier this year, because it showed that the calves of BSE-infected cows had been culled.

The inquiry is expected to continue until next March, with a report by its chairman, Lord Justice Phillips, to be delivered in June 1999.

HAMISH MCRAE

'Voters clearly like politicians to appear unstuffy, approachable, slick - and ideally to have a good head of hair'

— THURSDAY REVIEW, PAGE 3 →

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FILM

Killing time killing Nazis

THE BIG PICTURE



RYAN GILBEY

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)
DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG
170 MINS
STARRING TOM HANKS
AND TOM SIZEMORE

Saving Private Ryan tells the story of an eight-man mission to locate and rescue a single soldier out of the thousands scattered behind enemy lines in the Second World War, and it has the notable distinction of featuring a career-best performance from the actor Tom Hanks, though it is unlikely that the film will be defined by this in the minds of those who see it. What will be branded on the memory are a pair of visceral, devastating 25-minute battle sequences by which the movie is bookended. Or rather, almost bookended.

What actually open and close the film are modern-day scenes – an elderly war veteran trooping to a cemetery with two successive generations of family in tow, his children pious, his grandchildren respectfully furrowing their brows. It's less itself a case of the film introducing itself than Spielberg announcing his ideal audience profile.

This kind of contextualising is nothing more than an inexperienced screenwriter's way of justifying the story which is about to be told. The device didn't work when Ken Loach employed it in *Land and Freedom*, though he had the defence that the Spanish Civil War still retained a degree of obscurity. You may feel less secure placing yourself in the hands of a film-maker who structures his movie to accommodate those members of the audience who are a bit fuzzy about that Second World War business. In its opening and closing minutes, *Saving Private Ryan* offers a reminder that the freedom you take for granted today was secured by conflicts resolved half a century ago. Funny that we couldn't be trusted to detect these resonances unassisted. Funny that the tale couldn't simply be told.

Saving Private Ryan is a film of interesting if contrived contrasts. One of the most pointed examples may be purely coincidental. As the Allied troops disembark on Omaha



Effortless power: some of Tom Hanks's (right) best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness

beach, the camera drifts underwater where a single bullet passes through the bodies of two soldiers. You can't shake the echo of an identical scene in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*: that film was set in the Second World War as well, but back then the violence was fun; the stray bullet provoked laughs, not gasps. It's a telling lesson in the choreography of context – the same director, the same act of violence, even orchestrated to achieve entirely different results. Not for the first time, you may have a sense of Spielberg wrestling with his own inflexible image.

For most of the film, though, he is wrestling with an inflexible screenplay. The combat footage which Spielberg shoots is an attempt to create as close to a subjective, unstructured viewpoint as is humanly possible when you're lugging cameras around in the mud and then pruning the results down to the

last millisecond in the comfort of your editing suite. What the screenwriter Robert Rodat has created is a piece of work which achieves the opposite effect. It is a model of organisation. Which would be just dandy if the film didn't begin by expressing a desire to articulate the chaos of war. Sure, bullets fly out of thin air, and you're as likely to be killed by a bomb that you are attempting to plant as by a wily German sniper. But nothing else about life during wartime is so arbitrary.

Did you know, for example, that squads were comprised of one member from each of the various personality groups? The team which Captain John Miller (Hanks) is left with after the massacre at Omaha Beach is a good example. There is the gruff Ernest Borgnine bulldog (Tom Sizemore). The cheeky Brooklyn wide-boy (Edward Burns). The intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone respects (Giovanni Ribisi)

and the intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone ridicules because he hasn't learned to kill yet (Jeremy Davies). But don't worry. He will. Rodat doesn't really go in for characterisation. In its place, everyone gets a story to tell, most of the stories expressing unexpected sensitivity, philosophical depth and sturdy heterosexuality, often all at the same time. It may be the single brilliant stroke of the script to deny that privilege to Miller. As the soldiers kill time, waiting for Nazi tanks to roll over the bridge which they have crammed with explosives, Miller mentions something which brings him happiness: the thought of his wife, pruning the garden. "Tell me about your wife and those rose bushes," someone asks. "No," Miller says quietly but firmly. "That one I save just for me."

Hanks may be one of the only actors who could carry off a role as predictably righteous as Captain Miller

and still suggest that there are parts of him no one will ever get to see. It helps that his face is starting to age and crease – his skin looks as rumpled and tattered as his uniform. And yet he can still draw on that boyish, flashing grin when he needs to. Some of his best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness – when he witnesses two soldiers gunning down a German prisoner; you can't be sure exactly where his evident sympathies are directed.

The effortless power of Hanks's work provides another unwelcome contrast, underlining the clumsiness of Spielberg's manipulative techniques, which grow steadily less sophisticated with each film he makes.

The clash between the battle sequences in *Saving Private Ryan* and the material in between is jarringly unhappy, and it comes very suddenly with a single camera movement and a murmur of John

Williams' mournful score. After the indiscriminate carnage on Omaha Beach, the camera stops judgering and starts sweeping gracefully across the bodies lapped by the rusty-red waves, finally settling on the kitbag of a dead soldier. Pvt Ryan. From there, the film goes on to reveal that only one of the four Ryan brothers remains alive, and Captain Miller and his squad are dispatched to find him as bugles start tooting on the soundtrack, and you realise that the opening burst of formal daring was only there to lull you into a false sense of security. It isn't the explicit violence of the opening section which is shocking – anyone who braved the Vietnam scenes of the *Hughes Brothers' Dead Presidents* is unlikely to experience paroxysms at the sight of a heap of unspooled intestines. Rather, the relentless motion of the camera, and Spielberg's disregard for visual and aural coherence, are

more unsettling than any of the atrocities that he stages.

There are juxtapositions here which are the work of a great craftsman – between the dispassionate typists coldly bashing out tragic telegrams, and the sensitive voiceover reading their contents; between the gruff, bulky soldiers slouching around a gramophone, and the fragility of the Edith Piaf record which is being played on it; between the tragedy of your friends losing their legs and the urgency with which you must remove their ammunition and leave them for dead. But a director who switches so cleanly between two disparate styles can easily appear disloyal to both. It may be that the film's tentative, non-committal closing image – a gossamer-thin American flag rendered grey and bloodless by the sun blazing through its fabric – says more about Spielberg than anything in the preceding three hours.

ALSO SHOWING

LA VIE DE JESUS (NC) BRUNO DUMONT ■ COUSIN BETTE (15) DES MCANUFF
■ BABYMOTHER (15) JULIAN HENRIQUES



A film on heat: The real star of 'Babymother' is the costume designer

THE UNBLINKING, blank-eyed coolness of Bruno Dumont's *La Vie de Jesus* is mirrored in the inscrutable face of the film's main character, Freddy (David Douche), is 20 years old, with a face like a Yorkshire pudding of at least three times that age. He lives in Baileul, a town in northern France where a chip paper blowing along the road counts as big news. His passions, if that face could ever be said to express passion about anything, are his motorbike (which he crashes at least once a day), his chaffinch (which he enters in bizarre Sunday afternoon trilling contests), and his girlfriend Marie (Marjorie Cotterell). Freddy and Marie don't do much; they walk up and down the street, or make love. Sometimes, after sex, Marie even gets to ride pillion on Freddy's bike. They are small fish in a small pond.

Dumont's first feature comes on like *Los Olvidados* on downers, though it is largely free of even the most cosmetically editorialising present in Bunuel's film. The camera explicitly directs our focus only once, when we meet Freddy and his biking pals gathered around the bed of a friend who is dying of Aids. During the scene, we are guided toward a picture of Lazarus on the wall, which might sound incongruous but resonates sadly against the film's barren landscape, where the only miracle would be if Freddy got through the day without falling off his bike. In fact, Lazarus is a reference to the film's title, borrowed from Ernest Renan, whose writing strove to demythologise Christ by rendering him as human. Dumont plugs into the mood of Renan's work; the characters are earthy and even ugly, with ripples of racism providing the only focus in their lives, but there is a plain sanctity in his depiction of

them which approaches the essence of compassionate film-making.

The picture neatly underlines the boredom of Freddy and his pals with grim humour. What do you do when you're growing up in Nowheresville? You play in the marching band. You squat around on your piddly motorbike. You sit in parked cars and sing. Dumont has captured this world with painful accuracy. The combination of impulsive camerawork and a cast of beautifully unselfconscious non-

professionals gives the picture a raw tenderness that is quite breathtaking. And the attention to detail can really sting – Marie's delicate bird-shaped earrings, or the spattered faces of boys who have spent their afternoons spray-painting cars. But then maybe that's just because I'm from Essex, where you really aren't anyone at all until you get your first stiletto ring and speeding fine.

There isn't any substance to the comedy *Cousin Bette*, set in 19th century France and adapted from

the novel by Balzac, though as a frothy confection it can't be faulted. Jessica Lange plays the title character, a spinner who slips into the role of benefactor to a feral young sculptor (Aden Young). But in pursuing both validation and love from the boy, Bette inadvertently begins a chain of jealousy and betrayal that implicates everyone she knows, from her late cousin's wife husband (a very funny, very poignant Hugh Laurie) to a rapacious actress (Elizabeth Shue).

It may be disappointing that the film doesn't exploit more than just the usual trappings of the costume drama, but then there is still a lot to be said for heaving bosoms, ostentatious embroidery and the sight of British character actors twiddling stringy moustaches and being crisply bitchy to one another. Although the staging can be flat, the director, Des McAnuff, keeps the picture rattling along with sufficient pace and flair to evoke favourable comparisons with Richard Lester. It is the presence of Jessica Lange, though, which gives *Cousin Bette* its alluring glamour. With her deep, molasses eyes and purring voice, she is perfect as the scheming spider who gets stuck in her own web. Some trick to make malevolence this seductive.

The British reggae musical *Babymother* is vibrant and delightful, and you wouldn't expect to find those words associated with something set in Hadesien. A "babymother" is a parent who is still practically a child herself, the film's heroine (Anjela Lauren Smith) is just such a woman, and a would-be reggae star to boot – if only she could find a way to negotiate child-care and the interference of a calculating boyfriend. Despite its gritty tone, the picture buzzes with vitality and colour, often literally: it sometimes appears that the film stock has been splashed with Day-Glo paint. Indeed, the movie's real star is the costume designer Annie Curtis Jones, who loads up the cast with electric blue wigs, feather boas, plastic separates and gold chains as thick as arms. Crucially the robust, sexy songs can make you sing. This film is on heat.

All films on release from tomorrow

VIDEO WATCH

MIKE HIGGINS

Chasing Amy (18c), available to rent now

The concluding instalment of Kevin Smith's loose New Jersey trilogy is an honourable attempt to scale the profane heights that *Clerks* reached and its successor, *Mall Rats*, so conspicuously failed to. Once again, Smith focuses on a trio of intelligent, sharp but cynically parochial twenty-somethings who refer to the universe beyond their suburban lives only when they need to give their jokes a bit of worldly breadth.

Smith is only useful in so much as it presents his characters a new topic for ironic deconstruction. So it is when Alyssa (Joey Lauren Adams), a bisexual comic book author, falls for fellow writer Holden (Ben Affleck), to the chagrin of his partner and best friend, Banks (Jason Lee). In terms of bringing any depth to the characters, though, Smith's handling of Holden's tempestuous affair with Alyssa and Banks's neanderthal response to it is one-dimensional. Smith seems to think male emotional immaturity is both hilarious (which it is) and an irreversible state of affairs (which it isn't), and uses Alyssa to prove his comic book thesis.

Amistad (15), available to rent from tomorrow

In case the blood-spattered first reel of *Saving Private Ryan* seems out of character for Steven Spielberg, here's an earlier film of his with similarly gruesome opening sequence, in which 44 enslaved Africans aboard the eponymous ship slip their chains and kill almost all their captors.

While abolitionists Theodore Joseph (Morgan Freeman) and Louis Taplin (Stellan Skarsgård) team up with buccaneer property lawyer (Matthew McConaughey) to secure the Africans' freedom, Spielberg shackles the narrative to the tale of their enslavement and transport across the Atlantic, as recounted by Cinque (Djimon Hounsou).

Spielberg is also unhappy with the ugly nature of the dispute on which the slaves' freedom rests – are they the property of the Queen of Spain, the surviving crew of *La Amistad* or the naval officers who "salvaged" them? The equivalent ethical ambiguity in *Schindler's List* had a face, Liam Neeson's. Here, it's the less attractive facade of the US political system and its expediency.

Desperate Measures (18), available to rent from Monday

Imagine Children's Hospital meets *The Silence of the Lambs* with a first-rate cast. Andy Garcia is a San Francisco police officer who discovers that homicidal sociopath Michael Keaton is the only person able to provide the bone marrow his dying son needs. When Keaton inevitably escapes in the hospital, Garcia has to ensure that Keaton isn't killed in the pursuit, rendering the bone marrow useless. To their eternal shame, Garcia and Brian Cox, as his boss, play this ludicrous mess straight.

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House leaders ponder Clinton's trial

MEMBERS OF Congress met yesterday to prepare the path that could remove Bill Clinton from the White House through the extraordinary process of a Senate impeachment trial.

The meeting showed that after eight months of investigation, the inquiry led by Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel, is about to emerge from the closed rooms of the grand jury into the political spotlight.

Newt Gingrich and Dick Gephardt, the leading Republican and Democrat in the House of Representatives, met colleagues who would play key roles in any impeachment. The

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

aim was to broker differences between the parties over how the Starr report will be handled. "Any impeachment cannot succeed unless it is done in bipartisan or nonpartisan way," said Henry Hyde, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who would play a big role in impeachment proceedings.

Mr Clinton tried yesterday to shore up his support in Congress, meeting House Democrats and once again apologising for his behaviour. Speculation is rife in Washington that he will apologise in some form at a

prayer meeting in Washington tomorrow, and that he may even accept the need for some punishment such as a congressional censure, as long as it is done rapidly.

That is unlikely to wash. Even some of Mr Clinton's own party, including Senator Patrick Moynihan, want impeachment proceedings to go ahead. Mr Clinton's efforts to get early access to the Starr report in time to write a response have also been stymied. The President has "sown the wind" and now he is "reaping the whirlwind", Democrat Robert Byrd, a former senate majority leader said yesterday. "Talk of

impeachment is in the air." That talk will turn to action in the next few days. Mr Starr was expected to tell Mr Gingrich, the Speaker of the House, that his report is complete and ready to be sent to Congress.

Under the constitution, it is the House of Representatives, the lower house of Congress - which has a Republican majority - that deals with the first stage of impeachment, equivalent to that of the grand jury. Once Mr Starr has done that, the House Rules Committee must agree a resolution that empowers the Judiciary Committee to set up procedures for hearings.

There is little practical experience in running an operation like that. Though impeachment hearings were held for President Richard Nixon, that was decades ago. The key issues that have emerged as problems are the ability of the Judiciary Committee to use its powers to compel people to give testimony, the dissemination of the report, and the involvement of Democrats as well as Republicans in planning any hearings.

Yesterday's meeting was requested by Mr Gephardt after he became worried that Democrats were being excluded. "Obviously, dealing with this re-

port must be done in a truly bipartisan manner," a spokesman said. "He had concerns that Democrats weren't included."

The Starr report, which grew out of the Whitewater investments affair, will examine charges for which Mr Clinton might be impeached, including lying under oath in his deposition for the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit, seeking to conceal his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, obstruction of justice by persuading her to conceal it and impeding the investigation into the relationship.

Any or all of those accusations could be true; but that does not mean that they are necessarily crimes, or that they are impeachable offences. However, the committee has yet to agree on what, precisely, constitutes "high crimes and misdemeanours", for which the constitution prescribes impeachment.

Once those definitional and procedural questions have been decided, the House Judiciary Committee, or more likely, a sub-committee, could hold its own hearings. Congress is due to sit only for another six weeks before it breaks for the mid-term elections in November, returning in January. It seems unlikely that any

hearings could be completed in that time, so an inquiry could stretch into the beginning of next year. The Judiciary Committee must then decide whether to recommend impeachment. That would be voted upon by the whole House and, if it agrees to impeachment, Mr Clinton would then be tried in front of the whole Senate, presided over by William Rehnquist, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Mr Nixon resigned once impeachment had been recommended; President Andrew Jackson was impeached and went for trial, but was later cleared by the Senate.



Bill Clinton looks back as he steps on to a helicopter for a flight from the White House to meet Democratic fund-raisers in Florida. Reuters

Dialogue of death on doomed Swiss plane

BY ANDREW MARSHALL



advertisements broadcast on the air) Du bisch emergency checklist for air conditioning smoke? [Translation: You are in the emergency checklist for air conditioning smoke?]

10:24:28 Swissair 111: [Background phone]. Ah, Swissair one-eleven.

At the time we must fly, ah, manually. Are we cleared to fly between ah, ten thousand ... eleven thousand and nine thousand feet? [Sound of audible signal when the autopilot is switched off.]

10:24:45 Swissair 111: Swissair one-eleven heavy is declaring emergency.

10:24:56 Swissair 111: Eleven heavy, we starting dump now, we have to land immediate.

10:25:00 Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, just a couple of miles, I'll be right with you.

10:25:19 Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, you are cleared to ab, commence your fuel dump on that track (while maintaining your present direction) and advise me, ah, when the dump is complete.

10:25:43 Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, check you're cleared to start the fuel dump.

No further communications were heard from the Swissair plane. It disappeared from radar screens about six minutes later.

The first law suit arising from the crash was brought in New York yesterday by Jake La Motta, the former middle-weight boxer played by Robert De Niro in the film *Raging Bull*.

His son, Joseph, was killed in the crash. Defendants in the suit include Swissair and Delta Airlines McDonnell Douglas, which manufactured the MD-11 plane, and Boeing, which now owns McDonnell Douglas.

The law suit alleges the crash was caused by "electrical, mechanical and/or structural failure."

Urs Zimmermann, captain of the Swissair plane

have time, could I have the number of souls on board and your fuel onboard please, for emergency services.

10:21:30 Swissair 111: Roger. At the time, uh, fuel on board is, uh, two-three-zero tons. We must, uh, dump some fuel. May we do that in this area during descent?

[Note: Two three zero tons represents the current gross weight of the aircraft, not the amount of fuel on board.]

10:19:19 Swissair 111: Ah, say again latest wind, please.

10:19:22 Halifax controller: OK, active runway Halifax zero-six. Should I start you on a vector for six?

10:19:26 Swissair 111: Yes, uh, vector for six will be fine. Swissair one-eleven heavy.

10:19:38 Halifax controller: OK, it's a back-course approach for runway zero-six [the runway has a "localiser" radio signal that shows the runway's location, but the system does not automatically show the pilot the precise descent angle]. The localiser frequency one-zero-nine-decimal-nine. You've got 30 miles to fly to the threshold.

10:19:53 Swissair 111: Uh, we need more than thirty miles.

10:21:23 Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, when you

Americans in fear of 'bounty' killers

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York



THE UNITED STATES has issued a fresh security alert to its embassies and citizens around the world because of urgent concern that Osama Bin Laden, accused by Washington of mounting terrorist attacks against US embassies, may be offering bounties to assassins who kill Americans.

A specific warning, meanwhile, was issued yesterday for American citizens in Lebanon to exercise the "highest level of caution" after the embassy in Beirut received intelligence that its compound may be the target of an attack similar to the twin bombings on 7 August of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

There is anxiety in Washington that Mr bin Laden may be plotting assaults against the US in retaliation for August's missile strikes against his training camp in Afghanistan, as well as the air strike on a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, that Washington described as punishment for the embassy bombings in East Africa, which killed 238 and wounded over 5,000.

Suggestions about bounties first surfaced in a Pakistan newspaper the day after the US missile strikes: it reported that Mr bin Laden was offering

\$10,000 for each American life.

A blanket warning from the State Department last Friday warned: "Americans should maintain a very low profile, vary routes and times for all required travel and treat mail from unfamiliar sources with suspicion." Several US firms have issued similar instructions to executives overseas.

While none has been confirmed by US intelligence, rumours have swirled for days that Mr bin Laden has offered bounties worth \$10,000 for each American assassinated by his followers. "We don't know if it's true," one official said.

"Our worldwide caution is not based on that. We just wanted to let people know the threat continued," the official added.

The American embassy alert in Beirut was reported in a statement from Lebanon's official National News Agency. The embassy, it said, had "advised all Americans living in Lebanon to be cautious, after the US government received information about the possibility of an attack".

While embassy staff said they had no specific intelligence about such an attack, nervousness was heightened by memories of April 1983, when, at the height of Lebanon's civil war, a suicide car bomber killed 62 people at the compound.

Meanwhile, apparent flaws in the security at the Nairobi embassy are likely to spur controversy in Washington. The *New York Times* yesterday reported that the driver of the bomb car had easy access to parking next to the embassy that was shared with a commercial bank next door. The area was protected by local guards, earning just \$100 a month and patrolling unarmed.

The security gap had remained uncorrected in spite of warnings about it to Washington from the US ambassador, Prudence Bushnell.

The State Department is asking Congress for an extra £2bn to turn its embassies all over the world into virtual fortresses.

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THE LAST words of the crew of the Swissair jet that plunged into the sea off Nova Scotia show them facing increasing problems as the aircraft systems closed down.

The aircraft appears to have suffered an electrical failure, cutting off the flight-data recorder six minutes before the crash.

The last words on the transcript are from the air-traffic controller: "You're cleared to start the fuel dump", by which time the plane was plunging out of control.

The following are excerpts from a complete transcript of the final conversations on 2 September involving Swissair flight 111 and air-traffic control centres in Moncton, New Brunswick, and Halifax.

9:58:15 EDT [1:58:15 BST], Swissair 111: Moncton Centre, Swissair one-one-one heavy [a term for a wide-bodied plane] good, uh, evening, level three-three-zero [flying level at 33,000 feet].

9:58:20 Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger. Proceed direct to Halifax. Descend now to flight level two-nine-zero [29,000 feet].

10:15:58 Swissair 111: Roger. And, uh, Swissair one-eleven heavy, from Speedbird [British Airways flight] two-one-four I can give you the Halifax weather if you like.

10:15:59 Swissair 111: Uh, stand by.

10:15:59 Swissair 111: Affirmative for Swissair one-eleven heavy. We prefer Halifax from our position.

10:15:43 Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger. Proceed direct to Halifax. Descend now to flight level two-nine-zero [29,000 feet].

10:15:58 British Airways 214: And, uh, Swissair one-eleven heavy, from Speedbird [British Airways flight] two-one-four I can give you the Halifax weather if you like.

10:15:59 Swissair 111: Roger. At the time, uh, fuel on board is, uh, two-three-zero tons. We must, uh, dump some fuel. May we do that in this area during descent?

10:19:14 Swissair 111: Roger. At the time, uh, fuel on board is, uh, two-three-zero tons. We must, uh, dump some fuel. May we do that in this area during descent?

10:19:19 Swissair 111: Uh, say again latest wind, please.

10:19:22 Halifax controller: OK, active runway Halifax zero-six. Should I start you on a vector for six?

10:19:26 Swissair 111: Yes, uh, vector for six will be fine. Swissair one-eleven heavy.

10:19:38 Halifax controller: OK, it's a back-course approach for runway zero-six [the runway has a "localiser" radio signal that shows the runway's location, but the system does not automatically show the pilot the precise descent angle]. The localiser frequency one-zero-nine-decimal-nine. You've got 30 miles to fly to the threshold.

10:19:53 Swissair 111: Uh, we need more than thirty miles.

10:21:23 Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, when you

Media visit to Tibet curbed
in Transvaal

Chirac's past may return to haunt him

BILL CLINTON is tottering; **Boris Yeltsin** is wobbling. Will they shortly be joined in their woe by the industrial and democratic world's only other President with real power?

President Jacques Chirac has no bimbo problems; the French economy is doing fine. But there is an outside possibility that, in the next few months, Mr Chirac could become the first French President to be placed under formal examination for legal wrong-doing.

There is a constitutional problem, however. Under one reading of the French constitution, it is impossible for a president to face legal proceedings while in office, except for high treason.

A relentless judicial investigation of the finances of his neo-Gaullist party, the RPR, has been creeping closer to Mr Chirac for months.

Evidence unearthed yesterday by the investigative newspaper, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, suggests that, in the seven years before Mr Chirac became President in 1995, the RPR party machine was widely and illegally staffed by people who were paid for doing fictitious jobs at the Paris town hall and in private companies.

Mr Chirac was both president of the RPR and mayor of Paris at the time. Last month, Mr Chirac's long-time associate, the former prime minister, Alain Juppé, was placed under formal investigation – one step short of a charge – for his suspected role in the affair of the "emplois fictifs".

Since then, new evidence

has come to light – including one scribbled note on a letter – which suggests that Mr Chirac knew as much as Mr Juppé about what was going on.

Le Canard Enchaîné yesterday published a drawing of the RPR's headquarters in the Rue de Lille, in the chic 7th arrondissement, overlaid with arrows and bubbles.

The newspaper detailed the activities of 40 people who worked full-time for the party from 1988 to 1995, but who were paid either by the taxpayers of Paris or by private companies doing business with the Paris town hall. This amounted to more than half the staff of the RPR at the time.

Le Canard Enchaîné estimates that the party was making an annual £1m saving in salaries.

As head of both organisations, could Mr Chirac have remained aloof from and ignorant of such systematic cheating, as his supporters insist that he did?

According to press leaks, the magistrate in charge of the investigation (one of several overlapping investigations into the byzantine finances of the RPR) has almost as much evidence pointing to the involvement of Mr Chirac as he has against Mr Juppé.

Judge Patrick Desmure must decide whether he wants to bring a tidal wave of constitutional and political argument – and abuse – down upon his little office in the Paris suburbs by becoming the first magis-

trate to take a tilt at the head of state.

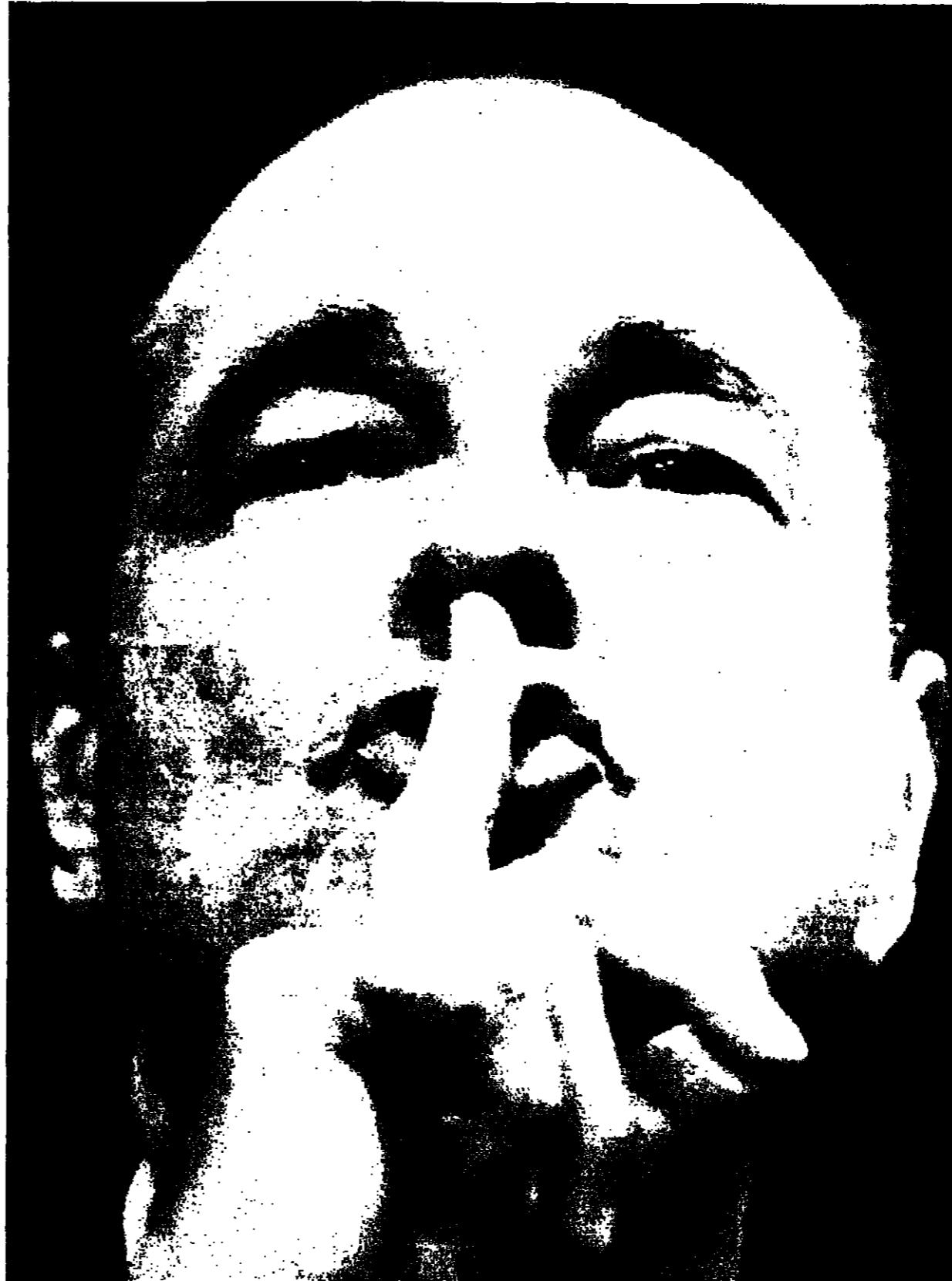
Everything turns on the ambiguous wording of Article 88 of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which was copied more or less unchanged from previous constitutions. This states that "the President of the Republic is not responsible for deeds committed during the exercise of his functions, except in the case of high treason. He cannot be placed under accusation, except by the two Assemblies [National Assembly and Senate]."

Under one reading, this gives the President complete immunity from all legal proceedings, short of treason, while he is in office. On another reading, the immunity does not apply to anything that he did before he became President.

Although the French judiciary is nominally independent – and increasingly truly independent – the case also poses an awkward problem for Mr Chirac's political opponent but co-habiting Socialist, the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin.

The attitude taken by the justice ministry under Mr Jospin's close ally, Elisabeth Guigou, could be crucial. Mr Chirac remains a popular figure in France; he remains, for all his failings, the only convincing figure on the centre-right.

Will Mr Jospin be tempted to let him be embroiled in legal problems before the next presidential election in 2002? Or could that rebound against Mr Jospin and make the day-to-day relationship between Prime Minister and President untenable?



President Jacques Chirac calls to his audience for hush – but does France still believe what he says?

Russia's king-maker challenges the oligarchs

GROWING AND TANNED, Gennady Zyuganov had the air of a man who was finally enjoying his moment in the sun. For years, he has endured the mockery of those who dismissed his Communist Party as has-beens. And for years, he has been scorned as a man with about as much charisma as a traffic bollard. Now, finally, the tables were turning.

Russia's political crisis has given the Communists more political muscle than they have had since the party was rebuilt on the wreckage of their Soviet predecessors. A reflection of this came last night when its central committee issued a triumphant, but fanciful offering to set up a "government of popular trust".

Times have changed since

property ownership. What Russia needed was a "left and centre government, which will enjoy the support of the majority in this country," he said. "We don't want power for ourselves because we don't consider that right under the circumstances. We want a broad coalition."

There was little trace of the other Gennady Zyuganov, the author of *A Word to the People*, the manifesto of the men behind the failed coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991.

Nor was there any sign of the conspiracy theorist who believes that the West is plotting to create a "New World Order", or the nostalgic Soviet who remains silent about Stalin's crimes and enthusiastically praises the dictator's industrial

successes. Yet there are also limits to his negotiating muscle, and he also knows that.

It is impossible for him to strike a deal with a Kremlin in which Viktor Chernomyrdin becomes premier. Such a cave-in would threaten his position as leader among the divided ranks of his coalition of forces.

He also knows that if Mr Yeltsin refuses to budge, and the Duma is dissolved after rejecting the hapless acting premier for a third time, there is no guarantee the Communists will benefit.

New elections seem certain to produce a parliament even more hostile to Mr Yeltsin, but it is uncertain whether that opposition will contain a larger Communist element.

The party has had a problem

expanding its electorate, despite 500,000 members and a nationwide network. Its voters tend to be elderly, with an average age of 52 in 1996. There is little evidence that its support has been strengthened by the current crisis; the only sure conclusion is that the economic collapse has deepened cynicism in the political process.

Thus, Mr Zyuganov and his colleagues have been willing in the past few days to go to surprising lengths to get a deal – a short endorsement of Mr Chernomyrdin. Their list of compromise candidates for prime minister includes Yevgeny Primakov, a former ally of Mikhail Gorbachev, who is loathed by many on the left who accuse him of destroying the Soviet Union. The Foreign Minister is "educated and experienced,"



Zyuganov: Sporting his pro-Western credentials

said Mr Zyuganov yesterday.

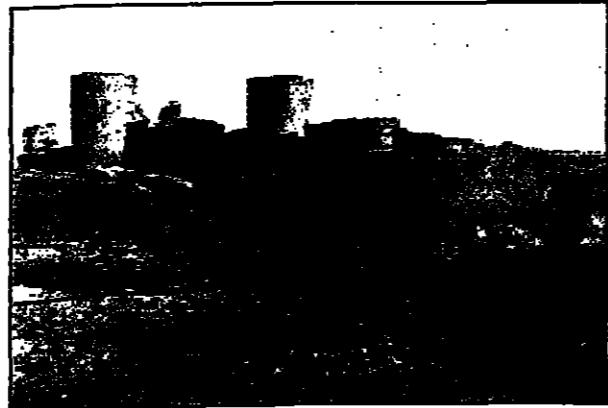
He was as complimentary about another anti-Communist, the nationalist mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov.

At bottom, Mr Zyuganov is a deal-maker. Although he boasts about his willingness to lead "massive protest actions", his impulses are to strike a bargain that gives the legislature more powers, and saves the Duma from dismissal.

President Yeltsin had talks yesterday with Mr Primakov, raising speculation that he might be about to propose him as prime minister to break the deadlock with the Duma. While political consultations went on behind closed doors, the rouble strengthened against the dollar for the first time since the start of Russia's troubles.

Struggle for soul of a closed city

FRONTLINE
ANI, TURKEY



Ani, the city of a thousand churches Robert Harding

A SOLDIER sits smoking on the wall of a half-ruined church. Huge battlements rise across the empty plateau. This is Ani, once the fabled city of a thousand churches, now a military border post. The ruined bridge that once carried the Silk Road here cannot be repaired, because one half is in Turkey, the other in the former Soviet Republic of Armenia.

"Nobody took care of Ani. It was being ruined more and more every day," says Sarkis Seropyan, a greying former technician who writes for *Agos*, the weekly newspaper of the 70,000 Armenians living in Turkey. In its 10th-century heyday, Ani was the capital of an Armenian empire. The few buildings left, their walls patterned in red and black stone, show the city must have been magnificent. By the 12th century it had street lighting, drains and an underground fresh-water supply.

But Ani spent most of this century on the tense border between Turkey and the Soviet Union, and nothing was done to protect the ruins. Situated on a high plateau where winter temperatures can fall to -39C, the buildings suffered severe frost damage.

Ani is still under Turkish military control. "There are far too many restrictions on visiting Ani," Mr Seropyan says.

Though the site is advertised as a tourist attraction, visitors have to obtain permits from the tourism office, police

and museum in nearby Kars before entering the site. On arrival, they are briefed by an armed soldier on where they may go. Troops patrol the site and use the ruins of a mosque as a look-out post. A ban on cameras was lifted recently, but photographers are not allowed to point their cameras at Armenia. Offenders are escorted from the site.

The dispute over the excavation is more complicated. The archaeologists, headed by Professor Beyhan Karamagali, are working hard to preserve the site and were instrumental in stopping the restoration work. Professor Karamagali has uncovered houses in Ani that she says are the earliest houses still standing in Turkey. It was she who discovered the underground drains, the water pipes and the street lighting. With the help of

what they're doing is ruining it," one of Mr Seropyan's colleagues says. The restoration was started by the culture ministry but has ground to a halt after being unanimously condemned by Turkish and foreign archaeologists.

The dispute over the excavation is more complicated. The archaeologists, headed by Professor Beyhan Karamagali, are working hard to preserve the site and were instrumental in stopping the restoration work. Professor Karamagali has uncovered houses in Ani that she says are the earliest houses still standing in Turkey. It was she who discovered the underground drains, the water pipes and the street lighting. With the help of

a French architect, she has taken emergency measures to keep afloat a church on the verge of collapse.

"It's very difficult working in a military site," says the professor, a short, stern woman with a scarf tied round her head to keep the sun off. "We have very little funding. We can only work in summer, when the heat is very bad. And when we first arrived we had problems with the Kurdish terrorists."

Professor Karamagali has

set up foundations in Turkey and the United States to pay for the preservation of Ani. But she says funds have been slow to arrive. "For the first two years we got nothing," she says. She wants to see a mu-

seum set up at Ani, to attract paying visitors. "With a museum Ani could be saved."

But the Armenians are unhappy about her work. "She doesn't know whose culture Ani belongs to," Mr Seropyan says. Professor Karamagali says Ani is the work of several races and cultures. Other peoples lived in Ani under the Armenians, and the city was later conquered. The professor says these other races contributed to the city. For instance, she says, the city's mosque was built by Seljuk Turks. Mr Seropyan insists it was an Armenian building converted later into a mosque.

"I was interested in Ani because it was not only an Armenian settlement but also a Muslim and a Zoroastrian one," the professor says.

Challenging the Armenian heritage in Anatolia is a sensitive subject: most of the region's Armenians were massacred by the Ottomans in the First World War. To this day Turkey denies that this genocide took place.

Professor Karamagali insists politics has nothing to do with her work. "We are not interested in religion or race. We are only interested in monuments, and in restoring them. Ani was a place where three different cultures, Christians, Muslims and Zoroastrians, lived together in peace and friendship as long ago as the 7th century."

JUSTIN HUGGLER



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What can we do for you?"

Italians jump airport queue

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels

FOR YEARS, Milan's travellers have faced no more than a 15-minute taxi drive from the city centre to the cramped but convenient local airport, Linate. On 26 October, that will all change when most airlines are shuttled to a brand new hub built 33 kilometres (20 miles) or an hour's journey away.

One important category of travellers will be spared the extra journey, though – those travelling to Rome, most of whom just happen to be customers of the national carrier, Alitalia. Nine other European airlines have cried foul and the row has embittered the Italian premier, Romano Prodi, and the European Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock.

With the issue still deadlocked, the European Commission warned yesterday that Italy has a week to negotiate a settlement or face a formal declaration that it is breaking European Union law. One source said it could mean "chaos" at Linate on 25 October, with foreign airlines refusing to move.

Behind the bust-up lie the cut-throat economics of the European airline business. Air travel has expanded and Linate, with its single runway, last year handled more than 14 million passengers, making the case for a new, northern Italian hub unanswerable.

For the new airport at Malpensa to become viable, the airport – built with European aid – needs traffic, hence the Italians' desire to shift airlines to it. But the promised Malpensa Express rail link has yet to begin service and work on widening the main road artery is also behind schedule.

Moreover, the Italian government's rules on who can stay at Linate have caused consternation by favouring only carriers on the most popular route, that with 2 million passengers a year. In practice, it means that flights only to Rome's Fiumicino are guaranteed a place, giving Alitalia, which dominates the route, the advantage of being able to feed its hub in Rome from Linate.

Rival airlines, including British Airways, Sabena, Lufthansa, Air France and SAS say they stand to lose out. Many of Milan's well-heeled business travellers take a short flight from Linate to connect to intercontinental flights from other European airports.

In the aviation industry, yesterday's Commission verdict, expected to rule against the Italian authorities, was as eagerly awaited as some of Linate's fog-bound arrivals. In the event, Mr Kinnock said that although the Commission had decided Italy was acting against European law, formal adoption of this decision would be delayed for a week.

Jackal sidekick arrested

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

in December 1975, which ended with the murder of three people. Soon afterwards, he signed up with the German court re-issued an international arrest warrant for Klein.

Hans-Joachim Klein, aged 51, known in his terrorist days as "Angle", was arrested by French anti-terrorist police in Sainte-Honorine-la-Guillaume, Normandy, where he has been living for five years.

Klein was involved in one of

Carlos's most spectacular and brutal exploits, the kidnapping of Opec oil ministers in Vienna

converted later into a mosque.

"I was interested in Ani because

it was not only an Armenian settle-

ment but also a Muslim and a Zoroastrian one," the professor says.

Challenging the Armenian

heritage in Anatolia is a sensi-

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ments, and in restoring them.

Ani was a place where three

different cultures, Christians,

Muslims and Zoroastrians,

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Headteacher recruitment crisis

Thousands of schools are being run by temporary heads because of the worst ever headteacher recruitment crisis.

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Popular boom for retail therapy

Compulsive shopping, where people find they cannot control their buying habits, has more than doubled in the past 20 years and is affecting more men and children than ever before.

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Tough new rules for wildlife sites

Tough new powers to prosecute landowners who damage Britain's most valuable wildlife sites have been proposed by the Government.

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Britain delays Kosovo flight ban

Britain broke ranks with the EU yesterday over plans to punish Serbia for its brutal treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

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Trapped whales mock free Keiko

While millions of dollars are being lavished in an ambitious project to return Keiko to his native Iceland, conservationists are fighting to stop the capture of more killer whales for display in marine parks and aquaria around the world.

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FTSE tumbles as Wall Street falls

World stock markets sustained heavy losses as they followed Wall Street downwards as fears over the future of President Bill Clinton unnerved investors.

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Centrica targets 4m customers

Centrica, the gas giant, aims to capture 4 million electricity customers and pay shareholders their first dividend since the demerger from BG.

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Wales calls off hockey match

Wales called off a hockey game against Canada at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur when eight players fell ill with suspected food poisoning.

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RFU suspends picking referees

The Rugby Football Union has suspended the appointment of referees for this weekend's matches involving Bedford and West Hartlepool.

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Anatole Lieven

Russia's rulers under Yeltsin have undermined its health to the point where it was bound to succumb to any serious new global financial infection.

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So long as Mr Clinton's public opinion poll ratings hold up, so long as he is credited with the strength of the US economy and positive national feelings, Congress will be reluctant to move against him.

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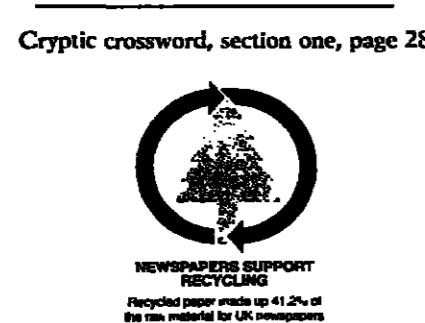
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Demerger delay hits Coats shares

COATS VIYELLA delivered a further blow to its shareholders yesterday when it announced it was delaying its planned three-way demerger due to turbulence in the financial markets and negative sentiment towards the retail and textile sectors.

The announcement forced Coats Viyella shares down 16 per cent to a new all-time low of 40p.

The demerger of the Viyella business, which includes the Jaeger fashion chain, had been expected to take place in the next few months. It

is now unlikely to take place until the second half of next year. The merger of the group's precision engineering division still depends on tax clearance, but Coats said it hoped to confirm the timetable early next year.

Kirk Stephenson, the finance director, said: "What we are saying is that, given the general instability in financial markets and the very poor

sentiment towards the retail end and the textile sector in the UK, we just don't think it's the right time to be putting Viyella out into the world on its own."

The delay came as Coats Viyella reported a collapse in profits from £44m to £14.3m for the six months to June, hit by the strong pound and weakening overseas markets. Operating profits fell by 22 per cent to £10.5m.

The figures were further damaged by nearly £30m of exceptional

charges. These included £1.5m for the closure of contract clothing operations and a £13.5m loss on the sale of the Talon zips business and Allied Thread.

In the Coats division, profits from the threads businesses fell by more than £10m, hit by a £3.5m currency hit and destocking in North America. Precision engineering profits fell from £20m to £15m mainly due to a weakness in plastics.

In the Viyella division, the fashion clothing business slumped to a loss

because of a poor performance from Jaeger ladieswear.

Mr Stephenson said it was not surprising that Marks & Spencer was apparently urging its suppliers to shift more production to lower-cost manufacturers in countries such as Morocco and Indonesia.

He said that although he did not expect to lose any business with Marks & Spencer, Coats would be shifting more of its manufacturing for M&S to overseas markets.

Mr Stephenson said the company

was not relying on an improvement in market conditions to enable its demerger to go through.

"We have taken steps to change the cost base in a lot of our positions and we have also made improvements in the way we are running our factories, which we believe will lead to improving profits even in difficult market conditions," Mr Stephenson said.

Group sales were 4 per cent lower on a like-for-like basis at £1.04bn. There is an interim dividend of 1.5p.

Miller combine wins rail tunnel contract

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

THE FIRST major contract on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link since the project was rescued by Railtrack is set to be awarded to a consortium led by the privately-owned Scottish construction group Miller.

The Eurolink consortium, made up of Miller and French and Austrian partners, has won a £110m order for tunnelling and a bridge across the Medway in Kent along the route of the 7.8-mile link.

The £5.4bn link is being built in two stages. The first phase will end at Fawkham Junction in Kent where the link will then continue into Waterloo on existing lines.

The second phase, involving construction of the link into a dedicated terminal at St Pancras station, will be built largely in tunnels from Stratford in east London.

Miller is also bidding for the tunnelling work on the second phase of the link. Construction of the first phase is due to be complete by 2004 with the completed link opening in 2006.

News of the contract award came as Miller unveiled a 2.24 per cent increase in interim pre-tax profit to £4.8m and indicated that a flotation was an option in the long term.

The group, which has interests spanning general construction, civil engineering, house-building, mining and property development, made pre-tax profits of £13.5m last year. Chief executive Keith Miller anticipated a significant improvement this year.

A flotation could value the business at upward of £200m.

Miller, founded in 1934, has become one of the biggest private-owned construction groups, with 2,300 employees and sales of £323m. The shares are 100 per cent owned by the Miller family, with six principal shareholders.

The group has a forward order book of £270m and is currently building the biggest sewer in Britain – a 7.5m storm water tunnel at Hastings.

Beazer call to scrap planning

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

HOUSE-BUILDERS should be allowed to build where and how much they like without being constrained by planning rules, Dennis Webb, the chief executive of Beazer, the UK's third largest house-builder, said yesterday.

He called for the abolition of the planning system, accusing local authorities of crippling profitability with "unreasonable demands".

Under the present rules, builders must apply to local authorities for permission to develop land. This often leads to long negotiations between the two parties over the environmental and social implications of the development.

In his outspoken attack on local councils, Mr Webb said that the planners' "negative attitude" to development led to long delays in receiving planning permissions. The uncertainty generated by the councils affected building companies' cash-flow and turnover, and made forward planning "a nightmare".

"It does have an impact on the business. You don't get the same level of volume that you would get without the system," he said.

Mr Webb said that Beazer had to wait 25 years to develop a plot of land in Newcastle-



The cruise liner *Princess Dance* sailing into Associated British Ports' docks at Barrow. She is the first cruise ship to sail into the port this year. ABP, the UK's largest port operator, reported first half profits up 11

per cent to £57m on turnover up 33 per cent to £173.3m. However, ABP's unit results would have been below last year had it not been for the release of a £2.8m provision. Exports of steel from its terminals in South

Wales have plummeted as manufacturers struggled under the weight of the soaring pound. Property investment rose by 16.4 per cent in the half, contributing a healthy £7.8m.

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Rugby cuts jobs to save £15m

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

RUGBY, the building materials group, is planning to cut jobs in its joinery division in an attempt to reduce costs and boost the profitability of the troubled business, the company said yesterday.

The unit, which makes doors and windows, was the subject of a sweeping restructuring last year following the acquisition of rival Boulton & Paul.

continuous process of reduction in the number of people employed," he said.

The restructuring was set to deliver cost-savings of £15m by year-end, he said.

His comments came after the joinery unit posted a 40 per cent fall in interim operating profit to £2.5m, hit by the strength of sterling and the loss of a major order.

The Rugby group reported a 7.9 per cent advance in pre-tax profit to £5.2m on sales down 4 per cent to £51.12m.

Separately, Caradon announced yesterday that it planned to sell its UK joinery division, little business and pipes division, representing annual sales of £182m. The company reported a fall in interim profits to £2.2m from £2.4m in 1997.

Turnover fell by 13 per cent in the first half and profit before exceptional was down by 8 per cent to £40.3m. Profits and margins in the core businesses – pipe systems and consumer

had been converted into £56.5m of net cash in the year to the end of June, which leaves Glynwed well placed for further acquisitions, but the process has inevitably shrunk the business.

Turnover fell by 13 per cent in the first half and profit before exceptional was down by 8 per cent to £40.3m. Profits and margins in the core businesses – pipe systems and consumer

and food services – rose enough to make up for a slight fall in profits from the metals processing division. Interest charges fell sharply.

The downturn in overall profit could almost entirely be accounted for by the disposals of businesses over the previous year and by the strength of sterling, which reduced published profits by £2m. The result triggered an 18.5p fall in the shares, which closed at 185p.

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

FALLING OUTPUT in the UK and Indonesia and a 28 per cent fall in oil prices resulted in a sharp fall in profits at Premier Oil, the exploration and production company with operations in the UK, Pakistan and South-east Asia.

Turnover in the six months to the end of June was down by 30 per cent to £51.1m and operating profits more than halved to £20.1m. After taking out interest charges and exchange rate losses, profit before tax fell from £38.4m to £13.3m.

On the credit side, discoveries in Indonesia and Pakistan have added 130 million barrels of oil equivalent to anticipated oil reserves, an increase of 39 per cent.

Premier's shares have halved in value since May. They fell a further 1.5p to 26.75p yesterday after the chief executive, Charles Jamieson, said the company was not in current takeover talks.

Oil shares, including Enterprise Oil, Lassmo and Tullow Oil, were undermined by new forecasts from Fergus McLeod at BT Alex Brown, who cut his average crude price forecast for this year to \$14.50 a barrel, from \$20 to \$16 for 1999 and from \$20 to \$18 for 2000. Mr McLeod had been bullish on prices.

Premier Oil hit by sharp fall in profits

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

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Laptop 123 Laptop 400 Laptop 500 Laptop 700 Laptop 900 Laptop 1100 Laptop 1200 Laptop 1300 Laptop 1400 Laptop 1500 Laptop 1600 Laptop 1700 Laptop 1800 Laptop 1900 Laptop 2000 Laptop 2100 Laptop 2200 Laptop 2300 Laptop 2400 Laptop 2500 Laptop 2600 Laptop 2700 Laptop 2800 Laptop 2900 Laptop 3000 Laptop 3100 Laptop 3200 Laptop 3300 Laptop 3400 Laptop 3500 Laptop 3600 Laptop 3700 Laptop 3800 Laptop 3900 Laptop 4000 Laptop 4100 Laptop 4200 Laptop 4300 Laptop 4400 Laptop 4500 Laptop 4600 Laptop 4700 Laptop 4800 Laptop 4900 Laptop 5000 Laptop 5100 Laptop 5200 Laptop 5300 Laptop 5400 Laptop 5500 Laptop 5600 Laptop 5700 Laptop 5800 Laptop 5900 Laptop 6000 Laptop 6100 Laptop 6200 Laptop 6300 Laptop 6400 Laptop 6500 Laptop 6600 Laptop 6700 Laptop 6800 Laptop 6900 Laptop 7000 Laptop 7100 Laptop 7200 Laptop 7300 Laptop 7400 Laptop 7500 Laptop 7600 Laptop 7700 Laptop 7800 Laptop 7900 Laptop 8000 Laptop 8100 Laptop 8200 Laptop 8300 Laptop 8400 Laptop 8500 Laptop 8600 Laptop 8700 Laptop 8800 Laptop 8900 Laptop 9000 Laptop 9100 Laptop 9200 Laptop 9300 Laptop 9400 Laptop 9500 Laptop 9600 Laptop 9700 Laptop 9800 Laptop 9900 Laptop 10000 Laptop 10100 Laptop 10200 Laptop 10300 Laptop 10400 Laptop 10500 Laptop 10600 Laptop 10700 Laptop 10800 Laptop 10900 Laptop 11000 Laptop 11100 Laptop 11200 Laptop 11300 Laptop 11400 Laptop 11500 Laptop 11600 Laptop 11700 Laptop 11800 Laptop 11900 Laptop 12000 Laptop 12100 Laptop 12200 Laptop 12300 Laptop 12400 Laptop 12500 Laptop 12600 Laptop 12700 Laptop 12800 Laptop 12900 Laptop 13000 Laptop 13100 Laptop 13200 Laptop 13300 Laptop 13400 Laptop 13500 Laptop 13600 Laptop 13700 Laptop 13800 Laptop 13900 Laptop 14000 Laptop 14100 Laptop 14200 Laptop 14300 Laptop 14400 Laptop 14500 Laptop 14600 Laptop 14700 Laptop 14800 Laptop 14900 Laptop 15000 Laptop 15100 Laptop 15200 Laptop 15300 Laptop 15400 Laptop 15500 Laptop 15600 Laptop 15700 Laptop 15800 Laptop 15900 Laptop 16000 Laptop 16100 Laptop 16200 Laptop 16300 Laptop 16400 Laptop 16500 Laptop 16600 Laptop 16700 Laptop 16800 Laptop 16900 Laptop 17000 Laptop 17100 Laptop 17200 Laptop 17300 Laptop 17400 Laptop 17500 Laptop 17600 Laptop 17700 Laptop 17800 Laptop 17900 Laptop 18000 Laptop 18100 Laptop 18200 Laptop 18300 Laptop 18400 Laptop 18500 Laptop 18600 Laptop 18700 Laptop 18800 Laptop 18900 Laptop 19000 Laptop 19100 Laptop 19200 Laptop 19300 Laptop 19400 Laptop 19500 Laptop 19600 Laptop 19700 Laptop 19800 Laptop 19900 Laptop 20000 Laptop 20100 Laptop 20200 Laptop 20300 Laptop 20400 Laptop 20500 Laptop 20600 Laptop 20700 Laptop 20800 Laptop 20900 Laptop 21000 Laptop 21100 Laptop 21200 Laptop 21300 Laptop 21400 Laptop 21500 Laptop 21600 Laptop 21700 Laptop 21800 Laptop 21900 Laptop 22000 Laptop 22100 Laptop 22200 Laptop 22300 Laptop 22400 Laptop 22500 Laptop 22600 Laptop 22700 Laptop 22800 Laptop 22900 Laptop 23000 Laptop 23100 Laptop 23200 Laptop 23300 Laptop 23400 Laptop 23500 Laptop 23600 Laptop 23700 Laptop 23800 Laptop 23900 Laptop 24000 Laptop 24100 Laptop 24200 Laptop 24300 Laptop 24400 Laptop 24500 Laptop 24600 Laptop 24700 Laptop 24800 Laptop 24900 Laptop 25000 Laptop 25100 Laptop 25200 Laptop 25300 Laptop 25400 Laptop 25500 Laptop 25600 Laptop 25700 Laptop 25800 Laptop 25900 Laptop 26000 Laptop 26100 Laptop 26200 Laptop 26300 Laptop 26400 Laptop 26500 Laptop 26600 Laptop 26700 Laptop 26800 Laptop 26900 Laptop

Uncertainty drives investors to drink

IT'S ALL BEEN enough to turn investors to drink. Uncertain about the real strength of New York's overnight charge and bedevilled by Far Eastern anxieties, the stock market alighted on brewery and pub shares, encouraged by talk of their defensive merits in times of stress and strain.

Whitbread jumped 46p to 818p; Bass 27p to 902p and Scottish & Newcastle 25.5p to 812.5p. Investment houses BT, Alex Brown and Merrill Lynch were the main instigators of the sudden taste for booze.

Alex Brown talked about "above-average yields and sub-market ratings", and Merrill, although downgrading profits forecasts, stressed the industry's underlying value and waxed positive about the prospects for the major brewing companies.

Merrill remained cautious about the regional brewers, whereas Alex Brown talked about the small-brewers "coming into their own in the next two years". It also expressed its support for some of the out-of-favour pub companies such as Enterprise Inns, up 11p at 258.5p, and JD Wetherspoon, which

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

ended a shade firmer at 202.5p.

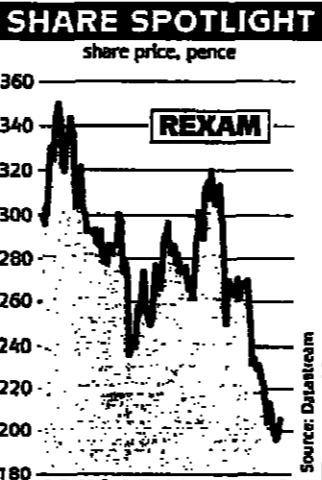
Footsie ended 32.9 points down at 5,311.3. It completely ignored New York's exhilarating display, managing an 87.8-point fall in the opening minutes, it later rallied with a 21-point gain, but with Wall Street uncertain ended on a cautious note.

The unease underlined the uncertainty in the market. It was subjected to a two-way pull, with the bulls and bears almost cancelling each other out. Lower interest rates today could signal at least a short-term victory for the bulls.

After the market closed the Footsie changes were announced. They were much as expected: Colt Telecom, TeleWest Communications, the computer group Sema, Seacor and Southern Electric were recruited at the expense of such traditional representatives of the nation's industrial might as British Steel, Blue Circle Industries and RMC Rank, the struggling leisure group, and Enterprise Oil were the other casualties. Gallaher and Imperial, the tobacco groups, just missed inclusion.

The Footsie presence of LucasVarity, the aerospace and engineering group, was thrown into jeopardy following its decision to move its main listing to the US. At one time the shares were hit 15p as the market fretted about pension fund selling as many institutions confine investment to UK quoted shares. But LV's strong figures, plus hopes of bid action, pushed the price up 2.5p to 210.5p.

Mid cap arrivals include Coca-Cola Beverages, the insurance broker Jardine Lloyd Thompson and Prion, Danks Business Systems, House of Fraser and Cairn Energy.



SHARE SPOTLIGHT
share price, pence

A raft of profits warnings and disappointing figures, perhaps not surprisingly announced after the day of the index calculations, took their toll. Albright & Wilson, the chemicals group where takeover rumours have circulated, fell 11p to 97.5p, a new low. Glyndford International fell 15p to 185.5p; Coats Viyella 7.5p to 40.5p and Devro 27p to 21p. Other casualties included Caradon, off 13.5p to 133.5p, and Tescos, down 7.5p to 97.5p.

Rexam, the struggling paper and packaging group, firm 8p to 20.5p after Panmure Gordon made positive noises, suggesting the shares could go to 30p.

Manchester United, on the agreed but controversial BSkyB bid, rose 15p to 215.5p; the satellite television station gained 5p to 42p. British American Tobacco was puffed up a further 13p to 479p but its former financial side, Allied Zurich, remained shrouded in gloom, falling 56p to 79.5p.

Granada, the leisure group, held at 83.5p. There is talk that a major investment presentation is planned later this month.

Heavy trading took place in

UPF, an engineering group. The shares stuck at 112p, near their year's high, as Seag put volume at nearly 26 million. Charterhouse Tilney was said to be a heavy buyer. Charterhouse also spoke up for Barratt Developments, the house-builder due to report figures soon. It suggested the shares were a buy because of their defensive qualities and the possibility of a "substantial swing in investor sentiment". The investment house said year's profits of £31m were likely with £100m next time.

Logica, up 14.5p to 1,822.5p on results, helped other computer shares to shake off their recent gloom clouds.

Desire Petroleum, seeking oil and gas off the Falkland Islands, fell 10p to 127.5p following a link with another South Atlantic explorer, Sodra Petroleum, a Swedish group with a London quote. Desire, once at 445p, is to take a 12.5 per cent stake in a Sodra drilling exercise off the Falklands. Sodra held at 42.5p.

SEAG VOLUME: 885.5m
SEAG TRADES: 53,448
GILTS INDEX: 108.61 +0.41

TROUBLED Regent Inns, which once pursued takeover ambitions towards the rival SFI pubs chain, rose 8p to 160p as its former target disclosed that it had built a 3 per cent stake. SFI, formerly Surrey Free Inns, describes its holding as an "attractive investment". The market believes SFI is nursing hopes of buying Regent, which has been hit by a profits warning. Earlier this year Regent shares were riding at nearly 386p. SFI shaded to 150p.

RUBICON, an engineer which has collected a £267m American bid, was actively traded. The shares held at 230p against a 235p offer price. There was uncertainty as to whether the bidder, Applied Power, was in the market to buy or, perhaps, whether a rival bidder lurked. Turnover in Rubicon shares, according to Seag, was nearly 17.5 million, with deals of 8.7 million and 5.7 million shares swelling the volume.

Logica earns its place in IT premier league

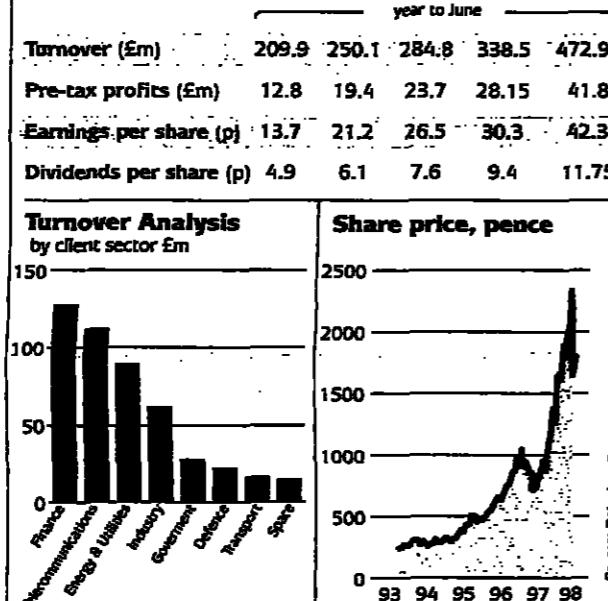
INVESTMENT

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

LOGICA: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £1.34bn, share price: 1,822.5p (+147.5p)

Trading record	94	95	96	97	98
Turnover (£m)	209.9	250.1	284.8	338.5	472.96
Pre-tax profits (£m)	12.8	19.4	23.7	28.15	41.8
Earnings per share (p)	13.7	21.2	26.5	30.3	42.3
Dividends per share (p)	4.9	6.1	7.6	9.4	11.75



Steady as she goes for ABP

ASSOCIATED British Ports is steering a steady course in the face of turbulent market conditions. In the first half, the UK's largest port operator has been buffeted by a slowdown in its core ports business.

Exports of steel from its terminals in South Wales have plummeted as manufacturers struggled under the weight of the soaring pound. Shipping of animal feeds was also down due to the wet summer. If low-margin oil exports are excluded, the total tonnage handled by ABP's ports in the first six months was slightly below last year.

What's more, Logica's growth is not so dependent on the need to upgrade systems for the year 2000 computer bug or the European single currency. Instead it is largely being driven by the introduction of competition in the electricity industry, the explosive expansion of mobile phone services and the growth of on-line banking and electronic commerce.

This is clearly paying off. In the year to June, operating profit rose by 27 per cent to £38.3m on sales up 28 per cent to £431.8m.

Another impressive feature was cash flow. Before acquisitions, Logica generated almost £50m of cash in the year which will stand it in good stead when searching for acquisitions. Martin Read, the chief executive, is hunting for deals that improve Logica's presence in the US and Germany, or bring the company a new product that it can sell to its global customer base.

Analysts yesterday edged up their forecasts to about £55m. That puts Logica shares, which closed up 14.5p to 1,822.5p yesterday compared to their 2,300p peak earlier this year, on a forward earnings multiple of 34.

That's still an unjustified discount to Logica's peers such as CMG and Sema. Buy.

Much of this performance was due to a robust increase in ABP's property operations. Property investment rose by 16.4 per cent in the half, contributing a healthy 27.8p. Last year's radical cost-cutting programme, which saw the departure of 10 per cent of ABP's workforce, also helped to run a tight ship.

Despite this resilient performance, a few clouds are gathering over the second half. The ports division is unlikely to show much of an upturn, given UK manufacturers' dire conditions. In addition the acquisition of American Port Services, the US dock operator bought in May for £160m, will dilute earnings this year and next.

On the positive side, investors can look forward to a £58m share buyback part of the £100m capital restructuring announced last year. Property will also continue to power ahead and a few disposals should help the cash flow.

Indeed the ports' unit results would have been below last year had it not been for the release of a £3.8m provision. Yet the company still managed to increase profits by 11 per cent to £25m on turnover up 33 per cent to £173.3m.

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On full-year profit forecasts of £82.5m, the shares - up 3p to 55.75p yesterday - trade on a forward rating of 10.

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SPORT

Hard truth of making deal with Red Devils

SOME MONTHS ago, a friend in this trade called from California to ask whether Rupert Murdoch had attempted anything over here comparable with his imminent purchase of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball club. "No," I replied, "but it's going to happen."

A pretty safe bet for anyone with half an ear to the ground was that Manchester United would end up in Murdoch's toy cupboard. Once his company, BSkyB, obtained a share in Manchester United Television, the country's first seven-days-a-week club channel, you could see it coming.

I'm not putting this forward with the "I-told-you-so" cynicism of an older generation. It's just that the only thing I found surprising about

news of Murdoch's latest acquisition was the shocked response to Manchester United's capitulation.

The trepidation felt by United's supporters, their sense of betrayal, is understandable. But people who are presently basking on the threat of English football raised by Murdoch's latest manoeuvre have mounted only token resistance to the march of market forces.

It is all well and good for the broadcaster and politician David Mellor to describe the Manchester United deal as "a cardinal act of folly", but his close affiliation with Chelsea - whose admission prices at Stamford Bridge are the highest in the Premier League, operating on the basis that if you want the

best you've got to pay for it - hardly supports the idea of a people's champion.

The worst nightmare for English football is that many of its best traditions and values will be torched in the cause of what many mistakenly suppose to be progress. The clue to its future lies, I believe, in the growing and perhaps irreversible conviction of corporate influences that elitism is the only way forward.

For the majority of football supporters, dreams are now confined to marginally improved stains. "I still go along because the club is in my blood," one recently said, "but I've given up on the belief that we could really get somewhere, perhaps even win the Premiership."



KEN JONES

get involved," he said. "It wasn't necessary to study their accounts to know that it is only a matter of time, and not a long time either, before they go under."

You only have to ponder for an instant what has happened at Manchester United to realise what the takeover implies; a philosophy based solely on profit and an ignorance of history. As to the institution of tycoony itself, I recommend you to the fact that demands are raised in accordance with investment.

We have heard and read so much about the scale of Murdoch's involvement at Old Trafford that it might not be a bad idea to point out the outcome so far of his move on the Los Angeles Dodgers.

general manager, Fred Clare, were sacked - only the third time this has happened in more than forty years."

The hard rule in these things, and very hard indeed for anyone who has grown up with football as a game not a business, is to stop kidding the people with the notion that investment takes their feelings into consideration. It does nothing of the sort.

There is something the people can do about this beyond expressing disapproval. They can stay away from games, turn in their season tickets and tell the clubs where to stick their disgracefully overpriced merchandise. That will not happen, of course. They are hooked - and Murdoch knows it.

Football: BSkyB's controversial takeover of Manchester United takes the game into a new era, but at what cost?

Profits and power are the new goal

THE RETURN of Dream Team, BSkyB's football soap about the mythical Harchester United, has now been thoroughly usurped. Why bother making programmes about fictional clubs when you can own the real thing?

The surprise about Murdoch's United plc, however, a dream-team collaboration between the world's biggest media mogul and football's biggest club, is that no-one saw it coming. It is the inevitable consequence of the sport's mutually dependent, financially lucrative relationship with television.

Money has always talked in football. The first champions, Preston, Everton, Sunderland and Aston Villa, pioneered professionalism and contained a significant number of well-renumerated Scottish imports. Now, however, it is so loud that little else can be heard above the sound of dollars being counted - and how telling that the deal was formally announced in an American accent, that of Mark Booth, BSkyB's chief executive. Booth, incidentally, dismissed as irrelevant the question as to whether Rupert Murdoch had ever been to Old Trafford. For most fans that is the most important question of all.

The deal means the wealth gap that was opened in 1985, when big clubs benefited from being allowed to keep gate receipts from home matches, is now unbridgeable.

Their fathers supported the local team, or knew nothing of a far-away team in red. For fans who see Manchester United as their personal thread in the fabric of English football this looks like a bad deal; for those who regard them as a source of reflected glory it is a good one.

Certainly, Manchester United ought now to be even more pre-eminent, at least until other clubs are bought up by multinationals. No longer should they have to haul at either high transfer fees or wage demands.

Yet they may still do so. Alex

Ferguson, more than most, knows that teams win stars, not individuals. Having a collection of highly paid stars is no guarantee of success and United are likely to improve the team by increments rather than with a splash. That is assuming Ferguson is left to manage in peace. If not, this instinctive socialist may walk.

Ferguson has been careful to limit his comments to praising BSkyB's football coverage, a feature few football folk would disagree with. His views on the deal are unknown, but one question he might ask would be "Why?" As Alex Fynn, the football analyst and author, said yesterday, "United already have a far greater turnover than the likes of Juventus. That they are not pulling their financial weight is due to the innate conservatism of the board, rather than a lack of money."

Fynn expects that to change but is concerned about the sting in the deal. This could mean putting BSkyB's television interests ahead of those of the club and the game. Though Martin Edwards, United's chief executive, said the club would be allowed to take its own view in television negotiations, Murdoch's track record suggests such promises of independence are worthless. Besides, Murdoch has not bought United for its profitability alone. This deal is about influence and control; it will accelerate the European league and cement BSkyB's role in its coverage.

For this is the modern Manchester United. They are a global brand, championed in St Ives as well as Salford, Faridabad as well as Farnworth.

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Certainly, Manchester United

United deal 'the first of many'

BY NICK HARRIS

THE TAKEOVER of Manchester United by BSkyB - should it go ahead unchallenged - is likely to be the first of several similar deals between England's largest clubs and media companies, according to City analysts.

"This is part of an inevitable endgame," said William Davies, a football analyst with the fund managers, Albert E Sharp. "If these [Premier League] clubs want to stay at the top, not just in England but in Europe, they need these kind of relationships [with large parent companies]."

Davies added that potential buyers will wait for the United deal to go through before making approaches to other clubs, but that those approaches will come sooner rather than later.

Analysts agree on the elite group most likely to be targeted in the near future.

"I think you've got to look at the big franchises - national brands with international potential," said Nick Batram, football analyst at the stockbrokers, Greig Middleton. "Arsenal and Liverpool would have to be top of anyone's shopping list."

Both clubs are privately owned, a fact that until now may have made them unlikely targets for takeovers. At Arsenal, where Peter Hill-Wood has been the chairman since 1982 and his father the chairman before him, the major shareholders are men who made their money in banking and property and have strong long-term links to the

club. The situation is similar at Liverpool, where the Moores family have been in control for generations. Neither would normally be open to offers.

"If someone came up with a £400m cash offer, it could be a different matter," said Batram.

In football's new economic climate, he added: "Everyone's got their price."

Liverpool and Arsenal are certainly likely to be targets then, but their owners can still ultimately decline propositions.

The case is not the same elsewhere, where stockmarket listings make it compulsory under law for the directors to consider offers. In this category, Aston Villa, Leeds, Chelsea, Newcastle and Tottenham are seen as being the most attractive buys.

Of these, Villa and Tottenham

might attract the most interest, said Batram, as their primarily football-based activities would come free from the baggage of property and other interests that Chelsea, Newcastle and Leeds have in their portfolios.

"Spurs have fallen on hard times but it's still a strong brand name with a big supporter base," said Batram, adding that now Alan Sugar has indicated he

may be in the mood to sell, Tottenham could be in the hands of new - probably media-linked - owners before long.

Leeds, with institutional ownership giving no protection from corporate bids, are equally vulnerable to imminent approaches.

So who will do the buying? Joe Lewis, the billionaire financier with connections to the

Time Warner and stakes in several European clubs already including Rangers, is one candidate. So too are other multinationals, possibly including Disney. A host of British television companies, led by Granada and Carlton will also be interested, as will cable companies like Telewest, which has a strong hold on the North-east.

"Don't rule out the cable companies," said Batram. "They may not have been big players until now, but they're looking for growth and consolidation."

The future for football, it seems, will be as much in broadcasting boardrooms as on the pitch. Whether that will be a good thing for the game remains to be seen, but BSkyB's deal with United will certainly not be the last of its kind.

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already played European matches away from Turin. The time may come when everybody supports two teams; the local one they watch in the

flesh on a Saturday afternoon and the European one they follow through the cathode-ray tube on a Sunday night. In time, the superclubs may even

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This is football, Jim, but not as we knew it. There has always been change in the game but it has usually crept up on us.

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Dodson unable to take the heat

BOXING

ADRIAN DODSON was given the all-clear after suffering from the effects of dehydration and exhaustion in the aftermath of his shock defeat by Moush Makamki in their IBO world middleweight bout at Bethnal Green on Tuesday night. Dodson was taken to the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel after the fight, but was discharged shortly afterwards.

Under British Boxing Board of Control (BBBC) regulations, the Guyana-born, Islington-based fighter, who was knocked out in the 11th round by Makamki, a largely unknown last-minute challenger from South Africa, faces an automatic 28-day suspension from competition.

Tony Shepherd, Dodson's agent, claimed excessive ring lighting, causing the auditorium to overheat, was to blame. "Adrian couldn't breathe from the 5th round on. I hope the Board do something about the heat," he said.

Dr Ossie Ross, a highly-experienced medical official of the Board, was also critical of the temperature. "I cannot recall such an uncomfortable night at ringside. It seemed unusually warm, especially inside York Hall."

The shirt-sleeved crowd had to swelter through a 30-minute delay before the last bout, waiting for the ambulance to return after taking Dodson to hospital.

The next bout at York Hall is on Saturday when Luton's Billy Selwer defends his European lightweight title against Manuel Fernandes of Spain.

The WBO cruiserweight champion, Carl Thompson, of Manchester, has been named British Boxer of the Year by the BBC.

Thompson won his title by beating Ralf Roachigiani in Hanover last October, and defended it successfully in two thrilling contests against Chris Eubank.

His first fight with Eubank, which Thompson won on points at Manchester's Nynex Arena in April, has been named Contest of the Year.

The awards will be presented in London on 13 October, an event which will also mark the launch of the Board's annual reference publication, the British Boxing Yearbook.

Rowe and Evans in title duel

RALLYING

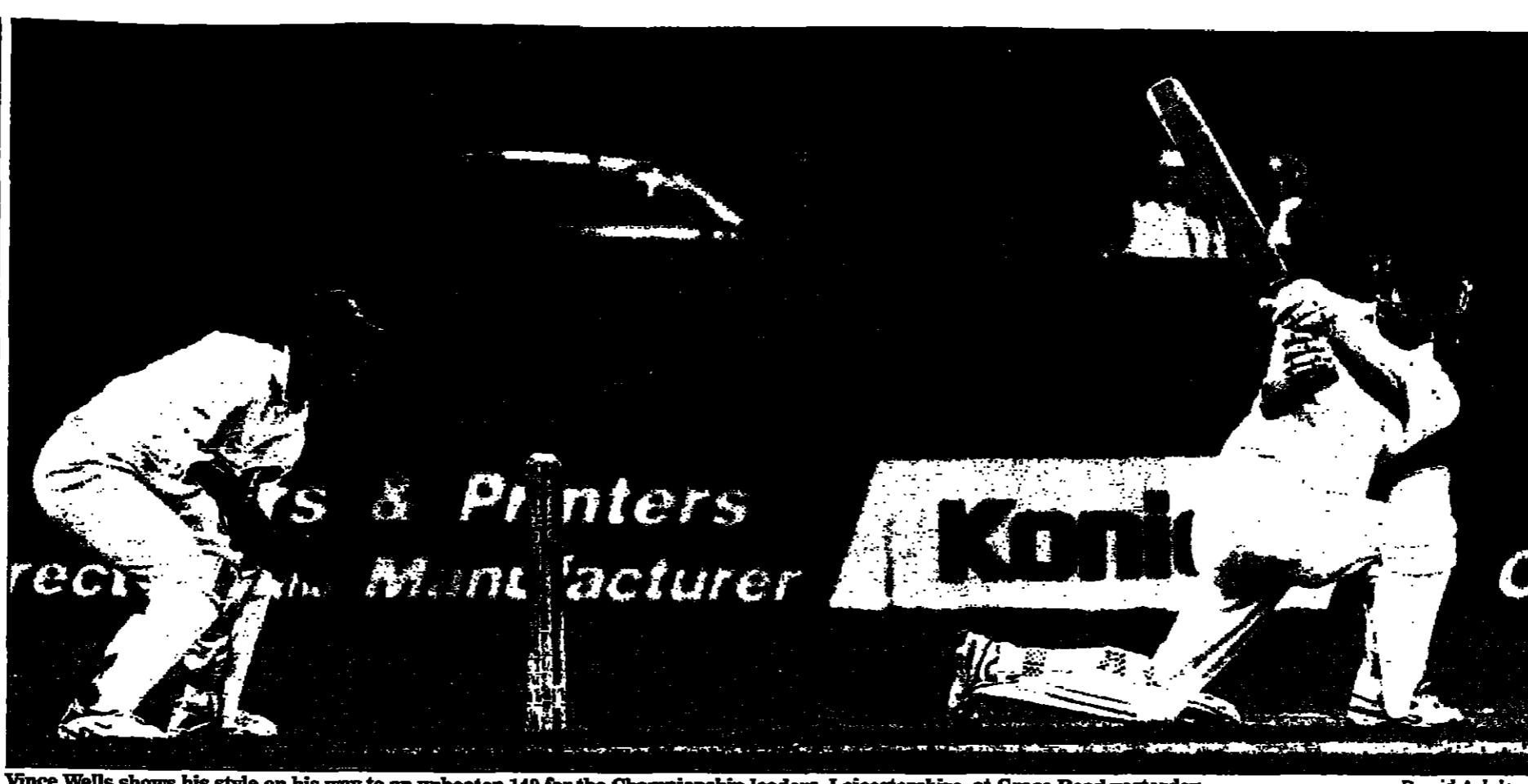
MARTIN ROWE and Gwyndaf Evans meet in a head-to-head showdown at the Manx International Rally starting today, with this year's Mobil 1 British Championship title the prize awaiting the victor. The pair, who have dominated the 1998 series, winning every round between them, start level on points and knowing whoever gains the better result becomes the champion.

Rowe has yet to be headed in the standings so far this season, having taken an early lead by winning in Wales. But Evans came back in the second half of the campaign and drew level after victory in the last round in Ulster. The Welshman has made an excellent start to his career with the SEAT team whom he only joined last autumn, whereas Rowe is in his second full year with Renault and has much greater experience of the car he drives.

Another advantage held by Rowe is that he will be competing on home soil on the Isle of Man - and gained his maiden triumph in this event last year. On that occasion, he and Evans went into the rally as two of five drivers with a chance of claiming the British title.

Evans' hopes were ended when he crashed out on the second day, and even Rowe's success did not prove enough as the runner-up Mark Higgins pipped him to the title. However, that still rates as a psychological boost for Rowe.

"I'm looking forward to a great challenge," Rowe said. "And it certainly makes a difference to drive in front of your home crowd." Rowe, 27, is attempting to win the championship for the first time but Evans wants to regain the title he won in 1996 when driving for Ford.



David Ashdown

Wells plunders vital century

CRICKET

BY DEREK PRINGLE
at Leicester

Leicestershire 301-6 v Essex

TOP VERSUS bottom is not always a foregone conclusion and Leicestershire did not have everything their own way on the opening day against Essex. For instance, they lost the toss, an inconvenience barely noticed as Vince Wells powered his way to an unbeaten 140 as his team finished strongly with a further three batting points in the bag.

Hitting the ball hard, especially through the covers, Wells was merciless on anything loose. Worst to suffer was Jamie Grove, whose first three overs cost 27 runs. Since joining Leicestershire from Kent in

1992, Wells' batting has tended to follow the Nietzschean principle of plundering when you cannot steal. In 1996 he scored two double hundreds in a row, adding 197 in his next Championship knock. Yesterday's offering, played in front of a noisy crowd of 400, was his third of the season, though

only the 12th of his career. Mind you, Essex offered him the means to indulge himself and their bowling, buffeted by strong winds, erred far too often on the short and wide side.

As an all-rounder Wells, now 33, is something of a misfit. Now probably regarded as too old for A tours, his only representative honours would have come this winter in the Super Max Eighties in Perth, a competition now cancelled.

But if he dominated proceedings until after tea, when he appeared to run out of steam, things did not appear as

easy at the other end. In the sixth over of play Darren Maddy edged Ashley Cowan behind for seven. Widely touted as an England opener earlier in the season, Maddy has had a poor season, so far scoring 503 runs at an average of 25.

Iain Sutcliffe, having squirmed the ball to short leg or Iran when nought, made to walk but decided to stand his ground instead, a change of heart the umpire Allan Jones did not concur, much to the bowler's displeasure.

Revenge, although not specifically Iran's, came 39

runs later. Sutcliffe's forward push at Cowan ending in Barry Hyam's gloves. After the break Ben Smith punished Iran by misjudging his pull and at 129 for 3 the home side, if not exactly struggling, were hardly dominating. It needed a triskilling from the acting captain Phil Simmons to give Leicestershire the initiative. Matching Wells's power, he scored 61 in a partnership worth 118 before falling to a coker from Iran.

The pick of the Essex bowlers, Iran struck again, having Atta Habib caught behind for eight. His excellence was not

symptomatic of his side, who were generally sloppy. Paul Nixon, dropped at stumps when he was on one, added another 25 before being bowled behind his leg. If Essex are to have any chance of avoiding the wooden spoon, they must take their chances.

At this time of year those in the shake-up for the title tend to spend much of their time watching both the weather and Cefax. If rain had a bearing yesterday in some matches, Leicestershire escaped lightly.

Staying dry could be as important as staying fit in the run-in.

Sluggish Surrey miss point

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN
at Chester-le-Street

Surrey 323; Durham 32-6

THERE WERE moments yesterday when it seemed as if what was left of Surrey's Championship challenge would perish in the near rain-free north-east. Just 11 overs were lost to the elements, while six Surrey wickets had gone before they had a bonus point under their collective belt.

It needed some careful garnering of runs by the middle and lower order to get them back on course again. As it is they failed to pick up the maximum four points, and that was against a badly depleted Durham attack which generally contributed 54 extras to the cause. The prospect of Surrey lifting the title for the first time in more than a quarter of a century looks increasingly less likely.

What was needed here was a balance of circumspection and adventure. They got the former through Martin Bicknell, whose innings was particularly critical.

He it was who ensured that

they passed the 300-mark, and more importantly, acquired a third batting point. They got the latter through Alastair Brown, who provided a much-needed

injection of pace to the run-making, while the contribution of their captain, Adam Hollioake, also provided a weight of runs.

Surrey had gone into this game on the back of a shocker against Yorkshire at Headington, which saw them knocked off the top and slipping five points behind the current leaders, Leicestershire.

What was needed here was movement off the pitch, especially early on, but even so Surrey made heavy weather of an attack shorn of Mervyn Betts and Neil Killeen. Ben Hollioake, promoted to No 4, showed some staying power (24 overs for a not insignificant 34) but by their own high standards Surrey found it tough going until Brown's arrival.

He fed eagerly off his favourite attack and there was every prospect of his hitting a fourth hundred against his favourite source of runs until sadly having reached 50 he was out to the 51st ball he had faced. There were no real fireworks from Brown, no monster sixes, just 10 hard-struck fours and some generally sound hitting. On the way to his 51, Brown passed 1,000 Championship runs for the season - the fourth time he has achieved it since making his debut in 1992. Adam Hollioake then aped himself, along with Bicknell and Ian Salisbury, and gradually Surrey clawed their way back into the game. But that one lost point could prove crucial to the outcome of their whole season.

Bicknell made a good-looking 39 and on the way shared in a record stand of 95 for the seventh wicket against Durham with Hollioake the elder, who passed 50 for only the fourth time this season.

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Russell's dogged fight saves day

BY JOHN COLLIS
at Lord's

Gloucestershire 232-9 v Middlesex

IF LEICESTERSHIRE and Surrey fight themselves to a standstill next week at The Oval and if it keeps raining at Headingley, then Gloucestershire could remain in contention for their first-ever Championship title until the last day of the season. Even if they are ultimately disappointed, the quietly effective leadership of Mark Alleyne and the presence of the most productive and hard-working overseas star on the circuit, Courtney Walsh, have already ensured a satisfactory placing and optimism for the future.

Ending the season against two sides lurking in the bottom four of the table, Middlesex and Nottinghamshire, they arrived at a blustery Lord's full of confidence. This may well have been bolstered by the decision of Mark Ramprakash to bowl first, since the most likely explanation seemed to be the purely negative - avoiding Walsh for a day or so. Middlesex have lost their last three Championship games, and have gone 10 without a win.

When, after a lively but rain-

interrupted start from Rob Curlliffe and Tim Hancock, Gloucestershire sunk to 67 for five, Ramprakash's choice had been transformed into shrewd generalship, with Angus Fraser and Richard Johnson making good use of a seaming strip. Early afternoon arrived with a

priceless run.

Jack Russell dug in trench

and occupied it for more than two and a half hours, while first

Bobby Dawson and then Martin Ball accompanied him. Steadily, while Ramprakash remained faithful to seam, the Gloucester middle order brought the visitors back into the game.

In the evening, though, Russell's restlessness undid him. He shuffled back to the third Middlesex pace bowler, James Hewitt, but left his bat in place. When, three balls later, Jonathan Lewis was sharply taken at second slip by Paul Weeks, Middlesex had reasserted their control.

Hewitt returned to bowl at Mike Smith and found the edge of his bat as well. And yet the day's last act belonged to the visitors. Ball's defiant innings

grew in stature while Walsh

clowned at the other end. They resume today having added 46

priceless runs.

Gregory escapes penalty

BY DAVE HADFIELD

THE SALFORD coach, Andy Gregory, has been exonerated of his latest brush with authority.

The volatile former Great Britain scrum-half made one of his now regular trips to Rugby League headquarters in Leeds yesterday, only to be told that there was no case against him.

A sub committee had investigated allegations that Gregory had directed remarks at the referee, Karl Kirkpatrick, after Salford's game against Leeds last month. It was not found proven that Gregory had addressed the remarks to the referee and he could not therefore be charged with bringing the game into disrepute.

Gregory has had a series of problems with referees. In May he was banned from the touchline and fined £2,500, £1,500 of it suspended, for abuse aimed at Steve Ganson. Last month he was hauled up again for failing to pay that fine, but escaped further punishment when he finally paid up.

Mick Cassidy, the Wigan and Great Britain forward, will decide his future tomorrow when he responds to the offer of a new contract. Cassidy has been linked with Huddersfield, but Wigan are keen to keep him if they can agree terms. If Cassidy does sign again, it will increase the likelihood of another forward, Stephen Holgate, leaving. Holgate has been unable to command a regular first team place.

Castlefode have extended the contract of their Australian half-back, Brad Davis, until the year 2000.

Tom Mitchell, one of the game's most visionary elder statesmen, has died at the age of 84. He was team manager of the 1968 Ashes-winning Great Britain tour to Australia.

Lathwell ends his two-year wait

having struggled to 65 for 3. Burns was dropped by Alan Wells at first slip on 43 before being bowled by Matthew Fleming, who had a part to play in four of the six dismissals.

Fleming began with two impressive catches to help remove Piran Holloway and Marcus Trescothick cheaply. He then defeated the Captain Peter Bowler for 17, before coming back late in the day to remove Burns, as Somerset lost three

wickets for only five runs just before the close.

Nixon McLean, the West Indies pace bowler, Hampshire to make the most of a 95-minute session at the end of the first day against Worcestershire at New Road. The 25-year-old Windward Islander took 3 for 39 in six overs and the medium-paced John Stephenson claimed a fourth as the home side struggled to 80 for 4.

In McLean's second over,

Abdul Hafeez was bowled when the ball came off a defensive bat and rolled back to dislodge the leg-baller. McLean then produced one which kept low to trap Graeme Hick lbw for six.

McLean struck again with an excellent delivery to take out Philip Weston's off stump after the opener had made 22 in 30 balls. Vikram Solanki fell to a mistimed pull, giving Stephenson a return catch from only his fourth delivery.

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interrupted start from Rob Curlliffe and Tim Hancock, Gloucestershire sunk to 67 for five, Ramprakash's choice had been transformed into shrewd generalship, with Angus Fraser and Richard Johnson making good use of a seaming strip. Early afternoon arrived with a

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Homer unites America

WHEN IT came, the home run that broke the US record was hard, fast and so low that it seemed at first it might not make it over the fence. But, so much energy did Mark McGwire put into the shot, it would probably have punched a hole through in any case.

America has been on the edge of its seat for weeks as it became clear that McGwire would beat the record of 61 home runs in a season set back in 1961 by Roger Maris. McGwire, of the St Louis Cardinals, and Sammy Sosa, of the Chicago Cubs, have both been in contention, but it was McGwire - in a match against the Cubs at the Cardinals' home field - who finally broke through.

He chewed nervously in the dug out before he took the field, almost visibly imagining the pitch. When he walked out to face Cubs pitcher Steve Trachsel, a hush fell on the stadium. Trachsel threw him a fastball and, at 8.18pm precisely, McGwire swatted it with tremendous force down the left line. He had almost run to first base before it was clear that he had taken his place in

BASEBALL
BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

history. The field erupted into fireworks, hoarse cheers and a splatter of flash bulbs for 11 minutes.

The home-run race has helped to restore some lustre to a game that, after the players' strike in 1994, had seen fans turn away in disgust.

McGwire himself is a charismatic but modest figure, whose first impulse after exchanging high-fives and salutes with his team-mates was to hug the members of the Maris family who had come to see him break the record. His use of a medical supplement, which is legal in baseball though not in many other sports, has barely dent ed his image.

The feat has taken the 34-year-old only 145 games, giving him plenty of time to take the tally well above 62. The legendary Babe Ruth's highest was 56, and when Maris broke the record, his use of a medical supplement, which is legal in baseball though not in many other sports, has barely dent ed his image.

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become a towering hero. "I will tell you, the whole country has been involved in this," he said. "People have been saying it is bringing the country together. So be it. I am happy to bring the country together."

Both the bat and the ball were flown straight to the Base-

ball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. The ball was recovered by Tim Forneris, a 22-year-old groundsman. "Right when it hit off the bat, I knew it was going out and it went right over the sign," Forneris said. "There was a bunch of ground-crew guys on

the wall. But I was right on the edge and I said: 'That ball is mine.'

Forneris promptly returned the ball to the slugger. That was no mean gesture: an anonymous benefactor had promised \$1m (£600k) for it, and on the private market it could have

fetched twice that. "What are dollars? It's all about experiences. What I have here, I can never change; no one can take it away from me," said Forneris yesterday.

"Baseball is back alive again and for me to be a part of it, it is truly an honour."

Mark McGwire (left) is given the 'magic' ball by the groundsman Tim Forneris (right) who recovered it AP

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THE WIND has become the dominant feature in the World Rowing Championships and is expected to disturb the racing for at least the next two days. Yesterday the breeze, which had been gentle and warm for the first part of the week, became a strong cross-wind and, although four lanes on the north side of the course were regarded as fair, the races involving five or six crews were postponed to the evening.

While the programme was still in force the lightweight coxless four re-established its credentials as a boat to watch with a scorching repechage, taking apart the Canadians who had beaten them to win the small final for places seven to 12 in Lucerne. The four, which had struggled to reach the pace all season, had two seasoned medallists in Jim McNiven and David Lemon in the middle together with James Brown, who won a world silver with the 1997 eight, at bow and the new international, 26-year-old John Warlock, at stroke.

Both the British openweight eights went down in cut-throat repechage races to compete on Sunday in the small final. The men finished second to the revamped and rampant German eight and were expected to qualify for the final but lost out to Italy and Romania. It was a disappointing outcome to a

season in which early success made them look like they could mount a serious challenge in Sydney.

The women's eight, who had never looked likely to repeat the bronze medal won in France last year, were beaten by a Canadian crew with several world and Olympic champions and by Belarus.

The men's coxed four which had finished second in Lucerne six weeks ago had endless troubles in training, losing Tony Garbett with injury and missing a week of the Varese training camp. After finishing last in their heat on Monday, they did the only possible thing and shot off quickly at the start in the repechage to take a lead, but were overtaken in the finish, having to settle for fourth place.

Britain lost the chance of a medal in the lightweight pair when on Tuesday night Caroline Hobson felt her back go into spasm in a trial sprint and had to call for emergency help from the team doctor. Although no announcement has yet been made, her history of back injury suggests a recovery in time for the final on Sunday morning is unlikely.

Wyatt rescues England

COMMONWEALTH GAMES
BY BILL COLWILL
in Kuala Lumpur

England's reply owed much to the intelligent thinking of Brett Garrard. He found himself in the unfamiliar right wing slot and sent a gentle lob goalwards which panicked the Canadian defence. Rick Roberts, trying to clear his lines, conceded a penalty stroke. Jon Wyatt stepped forward calmly to score England's equaliser in the 26th minute.

Garrard's cause was not helped by the temporary suspension of Mark Pearn for an unnecessary tackle from behind

in the second half and England were unable to score the winner their midfield supremacy deserved.

Garrard said: "We have hopefully got our first game blues out of the way." He will no doubt be worried by the form of Barry Dancer, who was: "I expected to win. There is bitter disappointment from everybody. We started in a tentative fashion and never recovered. We lacked discipline at set pieces."

Dancer was referring in particular to an 18th minute lapse by the defence which allowed Rob Short to deflect home a free hit to give Canada the lead.

England's cause was not helped by the temporary suspension of Mark Pearn for an unnecessary tackle from behind

Cool Cullen comes up with the answer

BY JEAN COLWILL
in Kuala Lumpur

With Nicholson moved to centre forward after the interval, England won two quick penalty corners, one of which saw Denise Marston-Smith's shot going too high and then Luella Wright misfiting.

Wales did not deserve to lose 4-0 to South Africa, who were sharp enough to score three goals in the first 20 minutes. Scotland, however, held Australia for the first 31 minutes before they found their stride and the goals flowed, with Alyson Annan getting the first and last of the six without reply.

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The 110m hurdles world record holder is due to compete for Great Britain at this weekend's World Cup in Johannesburg - but he will not be heading from there to Malaysia to defend his Commonwealth title. "Colin felt he had a very long season and, although not injured, he does feel mentally and physically tired and in need of a rest," the Welsh team press officer, Malcolm Stammers, said.

Scotland's cricketers had the opening match of their Commonwealth Games campaign washed out by a tropical

rain storm in the Malaysian capital yesterday.

The Scots had made 35 for 3 from 17.2 overs in reply to Pakistan's 201 for 5 before rain stopped play and forced the Group D match at the Victoria Institution to be abandoned. The washout was hardly unexpected - since Saturday, the torrents have arrived at the same time every afternoon.

Cricket and Malaysia's rainy season are clearly not going to mix well, and it must be a worry for the Games' organisers. Two more matches are scheduled to be played on the ground - Canada v India on Saturday and Malaysia against Jamaica next Monday.

In Scotland's aborted in-

nings, Shoaib Akhtar took the wickets of Bruce Patterson and Douglas Lockhart, while Steven Crawley laboured through 52 balls for his 12.

Shoaib and Shahid Nazir both proved difficult opponents, with the ball swinging in the humidity and the pitch quickening as the game progressed.

Keith Sheridan, the slow-left- armer, was the pick of the Scottish attack, conceding only 17 runs from 10 overs and claiming the wicket of Saleem Elahi.

Scotland seemed to have matters under control until the later stages of the innings. Pakistan had been 112 for 5 after 40 overs but stepped up the pace thereafter, amassing 89 runs from the final 10 overs.

Jackson stays away

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St Leger meeting: Little and largesse are the keynotes as the small Smart team make a successful sales pitch

Blade gets slice of the big time

IN A week in which sport needs to show there is still a place for the small man as well as Rupert Murdoch, Town Moor provided some hope yesterday.

Bryan Smart and John Stack, the trainer and jockey team, plus owner John Ford, a BT customer-services manager, are not at the top of the racing tree. In fact, they haven't even got onto the trunk yet, but yesterday was their moment.

Boomerang Blade won the St Leger Yearling Stakes for them, a race of absurd value for the quality of horses in competition, but nevertheless a contest which offers huge reward for the smaller man. The filly collected £178,500 for her efforts. Smart's Sherwood Stables in Lambourn had taken the riches and redistributed them to the poor.

Boomerang Blade's race was a charge limited to horses purchased at Doncaster's St Leger Yearling Sale. Keeneland this auction is not. It is more Minchkinland. Some of yesterday's contestants were plainly not very good at all, and Boomerang Blade was, on one criterion, the worst of the lot.

She was bought back for 25,000 at the sales and was consequently the cheapest beast in yesterday's encounter.

This, of course, did not fill the

By RICHARD EDMONDSON
at Doncaster

filly with an inferiority complex. She went out well and came back sweetly, as her name might suggest. Her reward was only marginally less than Smart earned on his other great day, St Sil's victory in the 1995 Prix de Diane (French Oaks).

The trainer, a former jump jockey of modest success, could not have been more ebullient had he been sweeping up another Group One win. He did not need the need to apologise for winning the richest two-year-old event in Europe with a little filly who will never scale the heights. "This is a race for the working trainer and the working man," he said. "It's fantastic and just what we need in British racing."

The owners of these horses can't go for Guineas and Classics where they're taking on the best-bred horses in the world. Today the atmosphere was so great we thought we were going for the Derby."

"We need races like this to keep owners in. I bought three horses yesterday [at the Sales] and I've got orders for another two tonight. They might not get to this race, but it gives people hope and a dream."

"The build-up starts when

you enter them just after you've bought them and goes on from there. This game's about people like John and myself, working men going for the working-class Derby. We might never get the chance to do this again, but at least we've done it once. We've won it."

The prestige race of the day, the Park Hill Stakes, was more like racing as we know it, as the fillies' St Leger was fought out by the monoliths Michael Stoute and Luca Cumani.

The latter's Kadaka was the last to leave the stalls, but she soon scooted to the front. For a long time it seemed she was destined to stay there. Doncaster's straight appears a never-ending story and certainly it must have seemed that way as Jimmy Fortune struck for home with just the stalking Delilah danger. Remorselessly, the filly with the blinker shades of a bandit crept closer and, at the line, her neck was the difference between the two.

There was an apathy about the man welcoming back Delilah, as the racing manager who spoke on behalf of Highclere Racing was Tim Jones. "Michael [Stoute] was quiet yesterday," he said. "It was nice when the rains came because we know she loves it."



The blinkered Delilah gets the better of Kadaka in yesterday's Park Hill Stakes

Julian Herbert/Allsport

Trigger can go with a bang

By GREG WOOD

WHEN IT comes to the essential attributes of heroism, Double Trigger has them all. There is the track record of consistent success, with 13 wins from 28 races, all but two of which were in Pattern company. There is the money in the bank, £210,000 and counting, and the flashy good looks to go with it. And, like all the best heroes, Double Trigger also has a flaw.

It seems almost spiteful to mention it as this magnificent stayer prepares to run his last race in Britain, but during a long and glorious career, Double Trigger has run deplorably badly on more than one occasion. What is particularly worrying is that the most recent example came in the Doncaster Cup 12 months ago, when Double Trigger started the odds-on favourite but finished fourth of five behind Canon Can. A repeat of that performance would be disastrous.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Spanish Fern
(Doncaster 4.10)
NB: Royal Result
(Doncaster 4.40)

ed at the car carrying Channel 4's tracking camera, which apparently drove so close to the field that Double Trigger was distracted. It might sound a little unlikely, but neither would it be a disaster if some public-spirited locals were to let the air out of its tyres at about three o'clock this afternoon.

DONCASTER

HYPERION
3.40 Subito
4.10 Spanish Fern
4.40 ROYAL RESULT (nap)

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places).
STALLS: Straight course - stands side; round course - inside, except round 'm' - outside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Drawn in the centre may be a disadvantage.
Course: E of town. Turn right at 3rd 'm'. Turn left at 3rd 's'. Bus link from Doncaster Central to Club 225. Ground surface: tarmac.

LEADERS: 1. BOLIN Joanne 3.40. 2. PILOT'S Harbour 3.25. 3. Bold Fact (nb) 3.10. 4. Double Trigger 3.05.

TRAINERS: 1. JOHN DODD 3.40. 2. JOHN FORD 3.25. 3. RICHARD EDMONDSON 3.10. 4. DAVID HODGKINSON 3.05.

FAVOURITES: 22/78 (20/3%).

BLINKED FIRST TIME: PATRON Saint (2.05). Freedom Quest (3.40). Royal Result (4.40).

Post: All (weighted 4.40).

SCARBOROUGH STAKES (Listed) (CLASS A) £16,250 added

ST Penitury Value £12,587

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2.05 PILOT'S Harbour
2.35 Bold Fact (nb)
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C4 2.05 RALPH RAPER PRINCE OF WALES' CUP (CLASS B) £25,000 added

2 YO 1m Penitury Value £15,738

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Double for Dutch sprinter

CYCLING

JEROEN BLIJLEVENS had the edge in a sprint finish in Murcia yesterday to claim his second stage win in the Tour of Spain.

The Dutchman pipped Giovanni Lombardi, the Italian finishing second for the third time in four days, with Germany's Sven Tenenberg third in the 165.5km (103 miles) stage from Olula del Rio.

The stage came down to a sprint finish after several breaks were thwarted. The best came early, Italy's Elio Aggiano escaping after 5km and opening a lead of one and a half minutes before being overtaken.

The continuing drug scandal plaguing the sport claimed another victim yesterday, when France's Philippe Gaumont was pulled out of the Tour of Spain by his team, Cofidis, after reportedly testing positive for the steroid nandrolone. Frenchman Philippe Gaumont failed a test in May but will not be punished because of differing doping rules.

The French federation said the Cofidis rider had a level of nandrolone exceeding the limit considered by most federations and by the International Olympic Committee as revealing drug taking. But the International Cycling Union (UCI) tolerates a higher level of nandrolone. As a result, Gaumont was not even told of the result of the test.

Blijlevens, who won at Cadiz on Monday, did nothing to disturb the leader, Fabrizio Guidi. The Italian still leads overall by two seconds from the 1995 winner, Laurent Jalabert of France.



Georg Totschnig, of Austria, is a picture of pain as he tries to recover from the effects of a heavy fall during the fifth stage of the Tour of Spain yesterday

AP

Everton line up £4.5m Bakayoko

FOOTBALL

BY ALAN NIXON

WALTER SMITH, the Everton manager, is likely to sign Ibrahima Bakayoko in a £4.5m deal next week. Smith has persuaded the Ivory Coast international striker to go to Goodison Park, despite interest in him from Arsenal. A work permit should arrive next week, with Bakayoko then flying in from his French club, Montpellier.

Smith thinks Bakayoko, 21, can partner - or possibly replace - Duncan Ferguson in attack. A fast and skilful striker, he has been a major

success in France in the past couple of seasons and should adjust to the English game.

The Bakayoko signing will take Smith's spending to an extraordinary £16m since his arrival from Rangers, but the manager now hopes to clear up whether the Italian striker, Igor Protti, is also interested in coming to Goodison Park. The £5.5m Lazio striker, who would join on 12 months' loan, has twice failed to arrive for talks despite all his travel arrangements being completed.

Another Everton transfer, which would bring the Tranmere goalkeeper, Steve Simonsen, should be

completed by the end of the week. The move has been held up because of Tranmere's internal problems over the decision by their chairman, Frank Corfe, to sell up. It has also been complicated by the fact that the Birkenhead club's other goalkeeper, the Welsh international Danny Coyne, damaged his groin during the 0-0 draw at Queen's Park Rangers this week. Everton may offer their reserve keeper, Paul Gerrard, on loan to Tranmere so that the Simonsen move can be completed.

Ron Atkinson has been lined up to take over as the coach of South Africa as a replacement for Philippe Troussier, who took the country to the World Cup finals.

Atkinson has been out of work since not having his contract renewed as manager of Sheffield Wednesday at the end of last season despite keeping them in the Premier League after replacing David Pleat. He confirmed that he is due to have talks later this week with South African officials about what would be his first step into international football.

Atkinson has been linked with similar posts in the past, most notably the Wales job during his days as manager of Aston Villa in the mid-1990s. However, this time he would

not have to worry about combining club and country commitments and has the experience and charisma to give South African football a shot in the arm. The South Africans were expected to make a favourable impression in France 1998 but did not win a game in failing to qualify from their group.

Atkinson said: "I have had talks with South African officials and will be meeting them later this week. Who knows if I will be the new coach? But talks have progressed to the stage where a meeting with officials would be worthwhile."

Southampton, who have made a poor start to the season, are mak-

ing a record £3m bid for Steve Watson, the versatile Newcastle United player. Southampton's manager, David Jones, has asked Ruud Gullit to sell him the Geordie and is willing to pay a high price in order to give his team a lift.

If Watson was sold, he would be the first major departure from Newcastle since the arrival of Gullit at St James' Park. Gullit ideally wants time to assess his squad, but Jones needs to strengthen his side quickly and is keen to talk to Watson over the weekend.

Newcastle play Southampton on Saturday, so no deal will go through before then, but a decision on Wat-

son's future will be made shortly. Jones has money left from the sale of the striker Kevin Davies to Blackburn Rovers and would also be in a position to trade off other players to raise cash.

Watson would be an ideal addition to the Southampton squad as he can play at right-back, left-back, centre-back and in midfield. He was an England squad man before injury held disrupted his career.

Typical of Southampton's problems, their most expensive signing to date, David Hirst, a £2m buy from Sheffield Wednesday, is one of the players on their injury list at the moment.

Celtic act to end bonus controversy

CELTIC PLAYERS and management yesterday resolved to end the bitter internal strife that has rocked the Scottish champions by enlisting a top agent to act as a mediator on all future financial discussions.

The move, endorsed by the managing director Fergus McCann and the general manager Jock Brown, calls a truce on the row over bonus payments which marred the build-up to the club's recent European Cup exit. Paul Streford, of Proactive Sports Management Ltd, is the third party who will now play a key role in restoring working relations between disillusioned players and the Parkhead hierarchy.

McCann, while not divulging what bonus agreement has been agreed ahead of the club's UEFA Cup first round tie against the Portuguese side, Vitoria Guimaraes, next week, stressed he hoped the matter would now be put to rest. "The recent dispute regarding bonus plans is no longer an issue of conflict and relations are good," he said.

"Indeed, Jock Brown has encouraged the players to appoint a representative to deal with any financial issues regarding their work as a group, and they have done so. I am assured by Tom Boyd that all future matters will be discussed amicably and in confidence, and the management will take the same approach."

Boyd, Celtic's captain, was also happy that, with the long-running saga now apparently reaching an amicable conclusion, he and his team-mates are free to concentrate on regaining their championship-winning form of last term. "The players welcome the approach taken by

the management to resolve recent issues," he said. "In future, all matters will be discussed and resolved inside the club."

"Paul Streford, of Pro-Active Sports Management Ltd, has been appointed to act on behalf of the players group on all future financial matters," Boyd added. "The players are pleased to move forward on the basis agreed. None of the players will speak any further on the issue of bonus payments. The players and management want the entire concentration to be focused on bringing Celtic success on the field, starting with Saturday's match against Kilmarnock."

McCann, meanwhile, insisted he has no intention of "selling out" to corporate investors when he relinquishes control of the club next spring. He admitted he had received several approaches to sell his 51 per cent controlling interest in the Scottish champions. One report suggested a Japanese banking firm, Nomura International, were ready to offer McCann around £20m for a majority shareholding in the club.

However, the Scots-born Canadian, who will end his controversial Parkhead reign by the end of the season, reaffirmed his commitment to placing the club in the hands of current shareholders and supporters.

"There has been a lot of speculation about companies and individuals claiming to buy my shares," McCann said. "I do not intend to respond to this. My position is that I will do what I consider is best for Celtic Football Club and I believe my divestment plan, namely to give first refusal to Celtic shareholders, fits that aim."



Berti Vogts has lost his head in a monument in Mönchengladbach celebrating the heyday of the town's team, Borussia

Ribbeck takes over as German national coach

THE FORMER Bayern Munich coach, Erich Ribbeck, is taking over from Berti Vogts as coach to the German national side, the country's Football Federation announced yesterday. Ribbeck, 61, previously coached Kaiserslautern and Leverkusen as well as Bayern.

Ribbeck's assistant will be the former Real Madrid and Germany midfielder, Uli Stielike, who is now 44.

Meanwhile, Vogts not only lost his job as Germany's soccer coach but also his head. Police revealed that Vogts' head was missing from a monument in Mönchengladbach, where he played club soccer.

Germany's mass-circulation Bild newspaper claimed the monument had been vandalized after his resignation on Monday, but police said the head had been wobbly for some time and fell off two weeks ago when city workers came to look at it. It has been taken away for repair.

The monument depicts Vogts and two other former players of the Borussia Mönchengladbach glory days in the 1970s - Günter Netzer and Herbert Wimmer.

The former Dutch national coach, Thijis Libregts, is to sign a four-year contract to coach Nigeria.

"Libregts will arrive here tonight to seal the deal and sign the contract papers on Thursday," said Abdumumin Aminu, the head of the Nigerian Football Association said yesterday. No financial details were given. Last week Libregts, 57, said he would come to Nigeria to finalise the deal. He was approached last month to replace Serbian Bora Milutinovic, whose contract ended after the World Cup finals in July.

Aminu said he expected Libregts to take the national team to new heights, adding: "We believe in him, that he can do it."

As Olympic champions, much was expected from Nigeria at the World Cup, but their campaign ended in the second round with a 4-1 defeat by Denmark. Aminu said Libregts' first assignment would be preparing the team for the 2000 African Cup of Nations in Zimbabwe. Nigeria face Burkina Faso on 4 October in their first qualifying match.

The Swedish Football Association have announced that no more international club matches will be held in Stockholm because of the high police costs of manning them.

"We give up. We have not made a formal decision yet but the mood in Stockholm is easy to interpret," Legrell told the daily newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet*. "It's a matter of politics and internal fights in the police core about money. There is a lot of grumbling."

Policing of last May's European Cup winners' Cup final in Stockholm in which Chelsea beat VfB Stuttgart 1-0 cost police an estimated five million Swedish crowns (£385,000), with about 1,000 police on duty.

About 13,000 British and 4,000 German fans descended on the Swedish capital for the Chelsea-Stuttgart match. Eight people were arrested in incidents before and after the game.

Police spokesman Claes Cassel said it was a cultural loss for Stockholm that international club matches would no longer be played in the city. "But as police I think it is good that we get rid of some of these problems," he said.

The Swedish FA will in future stage international club matches in Gothenburg on the west coast, but major internationals, such as last Saturday's European championship qualifier between Sweden and England, will still be held in Stockholm.

Henman picks himself up for season finale

TIM HENMAN has too much to play for in the weeks ahead to dwell on the disappointment of a fourth-round defeat by Mark Philippoussis at the US Open.

Restored as the British No 1 above Greg Rusedski, who lost to Jan Siemerink in the third round, Henman is due to defend an ATP Tour title in Tashkent next week. On returning from Uzbekistan, the 24-year-old from Oxford will join Rusedski in Nottingham for the Davis Cup World Group promotion play-off against India from 25 to 27 September.

The following day, Henman is likely to be on his way to Munich for the \$6m Grand Slam Cup. Although a Wimbledon semi-final and three wins at the US Open are not good enough for direct entry to the annual dollar-fest, absentees will enable Henman to qualify.

Carlos Moya and Alex Corretja, who contested the French Open final in June, have decided to miss the Grand Slam Cup in order to play on the Majorca Open. Moya, guaranteed \$350,000 for hitting a ball in Munich (A \$250,000 bonus as the French champion, plus \$100,000 for the first round) will be compensated by appearance money for supporting his home tournament.

Henman won \$431,250 after qualifying for the 1996 Grand Slam Cup, defeating Michael Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion, before losing to Boris Becker in the semi-finals.

Andre Agassi's name has been mentioned as a possible extra card for the promoters this time, although his Grand Slam record this year – fourth round in Australia, first round at the French, second round at Wimbledon, fourth round at the US Open – is not one to brag about.

"I definitely would like to play there," Agassi said after losing to Karol Kučera here. "It's where the best players are, so hopefully they could cut me a little slack and treat me like I deserve to be there."

TENNIS
BY JOHN ROBERTS
in New York

Henman is determined to build on the encouraging aspects of his summer: "Looking at the way I've played in the last two 'Slams, I really feel I've been in contention both times. The more I put myself in contention, I think I will win."

Moya, who defeated Corretja, 7-6, 7-5, 6-3, will play Sweden's Magnus Larsson in the quarter-finals. The match between the two Spaniards was played in cold, windy conditions and few spectators remained to the end. "The match was not too good," Corretja said. "If I had been a spectator, I probably would have left, too."

Martina Hingis, the defending women's champion, will renew her rivalry with Jana Novotna, her doubles partner in the women's semi-finals. Hingis, and her mother and coach, Melanie Molitor, were more emotional than they have been for most of the year after Hingis's defeat of Monica Seles, 6-4, 6-4.

Their excited reaction was a compliment to Seles, who has fought back remarkably from adversity to re-establish herself as a major force.

But Seles, who outplayed Hingis in the semi-finals of the French Open, was unable to match the world No 1 at crucial stages here. Hingis will now be eager to avenge her semi-final defeat by Novotna at Wimbledon.

Seles has qualified for one of the eight places at the Grand Slam Cup, which has incorporated a women's event this year, but Germany still holds too many bad memories for Seles to travel to Munich. "I really hope one day I'm going to be comfortable to do that," she said, recalling her stabbing in Hamburg in 1993. "Right now it's very difficult for me to feel safe to go back there. Two of my friends live in Germany, I might visit them. That's a different category to playing there. I just feel everything that happened to me was a total injustice."

The unseeded Australian, ranked No 22, is, as Henman said, "a dangerous type of player – there are definitely times when you feel the match really isn't in your control."

The unnamed Australian, ranked

No 22, is, as Henman said, "a dangerous type of player – there are definitely times when you feel the match really isn't in your control."



Tim Henman finds the going tough in his fourth-round loss to Mark Philippoussis at the US Open on Tuesday

Allsport

Photo: AP

Home unions set course for more troubled waters

RUGBY UNION
BY CHRIS HEWITT

THE SO-CALLED guardians of northern hemisphere rugby staged their most important meeting for years in Dublin this week and succeeded only in securing a minor rearrangement of the gin bottles on the bar of their sporting Titanic. There was no agreement on the early establishment of a British league, no solution to the impasse over the European Cup and the threat of sanctions still hangs over Cardiff and Swansea, the rebel Welsh clubs, and their militant English brethren.

vocabulary. And the outcome? "Well... er... um... we've set up a working party."

That working party will investigate the validity of a British league comprising leading clubs from England, Wales, Scotland, who have two district teams masquerading as clubs, and Ireland, who have no serious club activity at all. Hosie wants to present an interim report to the IRB next month. "I would say there was general enthusiasm for such a competition, at least in principle," said the former international referee.

It will take more than enthusiasm to get the project off the ground especially as Glamorgan Griffiths, the chairman of the Welsh Rugby Union, seemed intent on killing the idea stone dead. Griffiths professed himself in favour of a British league but added: "I can't imagine the WRU allowing its members to participate alongside English clubs who are intent on challenging IRB regulations and the governance of the game through their application to the European Commission."

Griffiths upped the ante still further by warning both Cardiff and Swansea, who have just demurred the Welsh Premiership by embarking on a series of unsanctioned friendlies with leading English teams that they could expect some form of official censure sooner rather than later.

"Some of the things that are happening defy common sense. Wales is a small country and we cannot afford a deep rift within our game," he said. Hosie and company find themselves sandwiched between a rock and a hard place. They have pledged to do nothing that might devalue the European Cup, but by incorporating Ireland into the British league idea they would effectively create a European Cup minus the French. And if they attempt to get tough with the English clubs, who have effectively wrecked this season's continental showpiece by boycotting the tournament and taking valuable sponsorship with them, the hardliners will scupper the British league plan in a trice. They feel they do not need a new league anywhere

near as much as it needs them; after all, they have the successful Allied Dunbar Premiership.

Yet the IRB, and its chairman Vernon Pugh in particular, insist that both the English and Welsh unions rein in their more recalcitrant members with a decisive show of strength; not easy when Cardiff expect to attract the biggest Welsh domestic audience of the season, perhaps as many as 10,000, when Saracens play at the Arms Park on Saturday. By contrast, Tuesday night's Avon-

avon-Ebb Vale Premiership fixture pulled in all of 500.

"Look, we know we need to make our domestic rugby more attractive, to broaden the horizons of our clubs by encouraging them to play cross-border fixtures," agreed Griffiths. "But these things have to be achieved on the basis of a properly organised structure under the control of the unions." And who would be attending the Cardiff-Saracens match this weekend? "I don't suppose I could get a ticket," he smiled, a touch sadly.

Tait's mount injured

EQUESTRIANISM
BY GENEVIEVE MURPHY

who is by Scindian Magic (the same sire as his World Games mount, Magic Rogue).

Both horses have benefited from training with the British dressage rider, Richard Davison, though Toucan has fewer problems to iron out than Magic Rogue, whose great forte is the cross-country. Toucan won the first advanced section at Hartpury last month, with Todd taking the second on Regal Scot.

Nigel Taylor, a late addition to the Great Britain squad last week, rides two nine-year-olds, Spitfire and Rye Lane, at Blenheim. Spitfire is the more experienced, having finished 16th at Blenheim last year and 22nd at Bramham in June.

Schumacher on his way

MOTOR RACING
now expect to reveal Damon Hill's partner in a fortnight. Heinz-Harald Frentzen, the German now likely to be released by Williams, Brazil's Pedro Diniz and Japan's Takanori Takagi are among the contenders.

Schumacher's older brother, Michael, will attempt to make peace with David Coulthard today ahead of Sunday's race. Both men stood by their words days ago, but have declared their willingness to meet.

BASKETBALL

Million Knights Lions have completed their roster for the forthcoming Budweiser League season, which starts this weekend, with the signings of Ben Avery, a 6ft 4in American forward, and Eric Butler, a 6ft 2in American guard. Avery (1995-96 NBL) and Butler (1995-96) are both from the United States.

Million Knights Lions (1995-96 NBL) and Butler (1995-96) are both from the United States.

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Million Knights Lions (19

SPORT

MCNIRE
25

THE MAN WHO STOPPED AMERICA P24 • DONCASTER BOWS TO THE LITTLE MAN P25

Fans united in their outrage

By PAUL VALLEY

IT RAINED, inevitably, in Manchester yesterday, but the steady onslaught of fine, penetrating drizzle did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the fans of Manchester United, who congregated from mid-afternoon by the players' entrance in search of autographs or breezy salutations.

Nor did it do anything to quieten their indignation at the acquisition of the club by the Murdoch entertainment empire. The fan whom *The Times* yesterday contrived to find who was in favour of BSkyB's takeover was nowhere to be seen. The outcry was universal.

"Murdoch Unwanted Fat Cat", said the T-shirt sported by one fan, the initials of its protest etched in parody of the MUFC logo. "He's not interested in football - just money," proclaimed its owner. "And he hasn't got where he is by throwing it around," he added, scornful at the suggestion that the cash might enable the club to sign the calibre of players who will not leave the Italian league for wages below £45,000 a week - double the United ceiling under its pre-Murdoch regime.

His views were echoed by everyone I spoke to in the line. It was not unrepresentative. A phone-in vote in the local paper showed that 96 per cent of readers thought the deal should not be allowed to go ahead.

Not that they expect their views to cut much ice with the Office of Fair Trading or the Monopolies Commission - or the Murdoch newspapers which seek to influence them. "The furor that greeted news of the bid," the opinion column on the business pages of Mr Murdoch's *Times* sneered yesterday, "seemed to indicate that what was at stake was the future of a local institution, kind to children and animals."

But there was more to the fans' upset than affronted local pride. Manchester United has not, of course, been a local institution for years. The train from London to Manchester had been full of Charlton fans, boisterous and boozey, determined to drink the buffet dry (which they managed before Stoke). Yet despite their high profile the Afflatus supporters were outnumbered by United fans, many of whom were born and bred in London but who travel up for every home game.

It is estimated that 18 per cent of all English football fans are supporters of Manchester United. The local paper yesterday claimed that the club has 100 million followers



The Manchester United chief executive, Martin Edwards (left), holds out a welcoming hand to Mark Booth, the chief executive of BSkyB, beside the Old Trafford yesterday. *Reuters*

around the world. The idea is not fanciful. The official supporters' club has 200 branches in 24 countries. There are 17,000 unofficial United web sites. Even characters in the Australian teen soap *Heartbreak High* are regularly seen wearing United shirts. (Perhaps Rupert owns that too).

At Old Trafford the owner of the "Fat Cat" T-shirt was from Wiltshire. Others in the line were from Essex, Somerset and the Irish Republic. And yet there is a resistance among the fans against further transformation.

Manchester United may have

begun as a club formed by a railway company for its workers. It may have progressed early this century to become a bastion of working-class Manchester culture. It may have become a greater institution after the Munich air disaster and the years of Bustyn, Best, Charlton and Law led to the club being taken to the hearts of the nation's housewives. It may have become the first English side to win the European Cup and then, under Alex Ferguson, have dominated English football in the 1990s.

But the resistance to going glob-

ally is stubborn. Murdoch, the fans say, is not just after securing a vote at the table when it comes to setting up the European super league. They talked similarly of 3am kick-offs to suit 50m far-east pay-per-view customers and of franchising United spin-off teams in Japan and elsewhere. "It could go either way," said one fan from Somerset. "He might buy in the big names or he might do what he did in baseball and sell the big names we have, sack the manager and move the ground, as he has done with his clubs in the States."

The personal vehemence against Murdoch took me by surprise (I had hitherto presumed it was confined to journalists). But there was at Old Trafford yesterday not simply the feeling that, as one fan from Essex put it: "I don't think one man should be allowed to control so much - newspapers, TV, films and now a football club." There was also a fairly sophisticated acquaintance with Murdoch's track record of kow-towing to the Chinese and Malaysians. Murdoch was made of Chris Patten's memoirs and the sacking of Andrew Neil.

Notwithstanding the traditional rivalry with Liverpool, there were recollections of Hillsborough. "Murdoch's Sun lied then about fans urinating on the dead," one Mancunian fan said. "Now he's come to do the same to the living," his mate added.

And then, at the end, there was a view of a different tone. "Personally I'd rather it stayed independent," said a besuited fan who turned out to be a management consultant, "but from a business point of view it makes sense, though there is the risk Murdoch will asset-strip it."

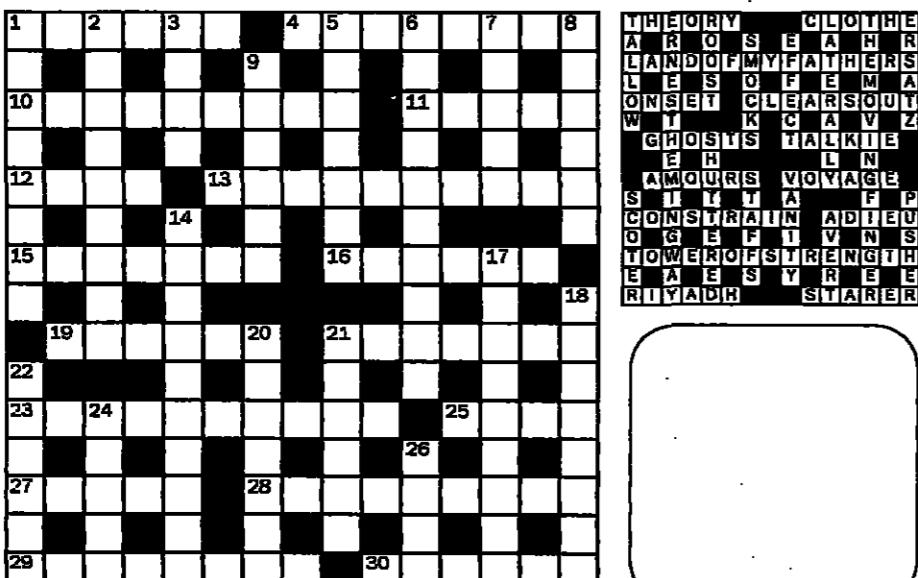
"We live in a globalising economy," said another suit, noting that the Murdoch acquisition had been reported in his morning newspaper alongside the news that Marks and Spencer is to buy more non-British goods and that Sunderland workers were in fear of a profits stamp by the Japanese motor giant, Nissan. "When Manchester United became a plc it ceased to be a football club and became just another business. Once that had happened, what has happened this week became inevitable."

THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3712, Thursday 10 September

By Spurrier

Wednesday's solution



ACROSS
 1 Unreliable clerk losing middle section in dossier (6)
 4 Student cooked with special aromatic ingredient (8)
 10 Bird, target of shooter fellow on Scottish island (9)
 11 In a position that's false? (5)
 12 Most unlikely to survive (4)
 13 Army chaplain? (10)
 15 Idealistic Union leader has a point, maybe? (7)
 16 Result in hospital department leads to trouble (6)
 19 Way opera will make a comeback - in huge open-air venues (6)
 21 Insurance company starts to set standards in a part of Germany? (7)
 23 Former enclave sur-

DOWN
 1 The Fox and Grapes, for instance, is absolutely wonderful (8)
 2 Plant producing gums carried by infantry (9)
 3 Long sentence in biography (4)
 5 Henry's involved in a reveal, swelling port (2, 5)
 6 Suit is cool, but crumpled, showing anxiety (10)
 7 Man incorporating two items of dialect in local usage (5)
 8 Journalist gets drink on finally reaching border (6)
 9 Shut people up without giving them a hearing? (6)
 14 Bridge player consuming food portions of little antelope (10)
 17 Rude customer, one being carelessly about (9)
 18 Cowboy's sidekick holds the ring as teller of tale (7)
 20 High level post (7)
 21 Having fulfilled financial obligation youngster accepts help (4-2)
 22 Women in denim running up in turn (6)
 24 Drink seen as form of support (5)
 26 Time to go out (4)

Heskey to stay with Leicester

EMILE HESKEY is poised to end speculation about his future at Leicester City by signing a one-year extension to his contract in the next 48 hours.

The Leicester manager, Martin O'Neill, is optimistic that the England Under-21 player - a target for Aston Villa - will commit himself to the club until the summer of 2000.

O'Neill said: "Money has never been a problem. It was all about how long a young player like Emile wanted to commit himself - and, to be honest, these days I can't see young stars signing their career away."

"But talks with Emile's agent have been going pretty well and, contrary to some suggestions, have not broken down. I'm really hopeful there will be something positive to report tomorrow or Friday."

O'Neill is also confident the American goalkeeper Kasey Keller, also in the last year of his current deal, will sign a new contract - and that the club's other big-name players will sign up.

"I'm not far away from agreeing a contract with Kasey Keller's agent," O'Neill said, "and the other good news is that people like Steve Guppy, Muzzy Izzet and Matt Elliott are also looking to sign extensions to their contracts. If they thought the club was going nowhere, they wouldn't be thinking along those lines, so we must be doing something right." The Northern Ireland midfielder Neil Lennon has already signed a one-year extension through to the year 2000 with the Foxes.

Aston Villa are preparing a £1.5m bid for the Swedish in-

ternational Fredrik Ljungberg, club sources said yesterday. The 21-year-old Halmstad midfielder won his sixth cap for Sweden in last Saturday's 2-1 win over England. Barcelona and Arsenal have also been tracking Ljungberg, who helped Halmstad win the Swedish championship last season.

The Aston Villa manager, John Gregory, is keen to continue his spending spree following the sale of the striker Dwight Yorke to Manchester United last month. Gregory has already spent £6.75m this week on the England striker Paul Merson from Middlesbrough. He was not signed in time to make his debut in Wednesday night's Premier League match against Newcastle at Villa Park but is almost certain to start in Saturday's home game with Wimbledon.

Rangers are poised to break their own Scottish transfer record for the third time this season with a £6m move for the Brazilian striker, Christian Correa Dioniso.

The Ibrox chairman, David Murray, yesterday confirmed that the coach, Dick Advocaat, will hold further talks with the 22-year-old, who currently plays for Internazionale Porto Alegre in his homeland. Dioniso has recently broken into the Brazilian national side, in which he is seen as a long-term partner for Ronaldo.

"I am obviously disappointed if this information has come out at this time," Murray told the Record newspaper. "However, Dick Advocaat will meet

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757 to Ivalo on 13 Dec. • all activities plus Husky dogsleight ride • Concorde supersonic to Heathrow £999

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Eurostar First Class to Paris on 10 or 20 Dec. • two nights

- city tour • Xmas shopping • Concorde return £699

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- helicopter • theatre • Concorde to Heathrow £2,999

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Oriente Express to Southampton on 16 October

- four night Oriana cruise to Tenerife via Madeira • Concorde supersonic to Heathrow £1,699

Oriente Express to Southampton on 15 November • six night Oriana cruise to Tenerife via Lanzarote and Gran Canaria • Concorde supersonic to Heathrow £1,999

Eight night Oriana cruise on 22 December from Gran Canaria to Tenerife via Dakar, St. Vincent and Lanzarote • Concorde to Heathrow £2,499

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THURSDAY REVIEW

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AP

Back to school

Kip Kinkel is a product of the American Dream gone horribly wrong. He had everything that a comfortable middle-class life could promise a 15-year-old boy: fine, loving parents, a beautiful home in the highly livable environment of central Oregon and a good school where he was deemed to be a high academic achiever.

None of which explains why, on the eve of the Memorial Day weekend last May he shot his parents dead at home and then blazed his way through his school cafeteria, killing two fellow students and injuring 27 others. More than three months after the tragedy, the Thurston Senior High School in Springfield is still coming to terms with the reasons behind the shootings and wrestling with the anxious question of how to stop anything remotely similar from happening again. Despite some impressively dedicated efforts over the summer by teachers, parents and community workers to heal the physical and psychological wounds, there haven't been too many helpful answers so far.

"This didn't just come out of the blue, it came from somewhere well to the west of there," insists Fred Willis, president of the Springfield Education Association, and a former maths teacher at Thurston. "There was no way to pick this kid out. You could have had the best security in the world and four high walls around the building, and it would still have happened."

A record five schools in America – in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Mississippi and Arkansas, as well as Oregon – suffered shooting incidents in the last academic year. Not all the communities involved were particularly salubrious, nor did the authorities always follow prudent guidelines on security and discipline, emergency issues such as handling the media. In Springfield, however, everything appears to have been played by the book and the authorities have received only praise for their conduct. "I don't think we'll ever know why this happened," says the school's principal, Larry Bentz. "The incident has generated much sorrow and a great deal of anger, which we're all trying to work through. Perhaps the lesson is the innate lack of control we all have. It's a

A new term has begun quietly at Thurston Senior High. But last May a pupil ran amok, killing and wounding dozens. Can there ever be a normal school day again?

BY ANDREW GUMBLE

very hard lesson we spend most of our lives trying to avoid."

On 20 May, the day before the shooting, Thurston received a tip-off from a parent that a gun had disappeared from his house and might have been stolen by a student. Within 20 minutes of the phone call the gun was found in Kip Kinkel's possession and the full story extracted: that he had bought the weapon on campus from another student, Korey Ewert, who in turn had filched it from a friend's house. Both boys were promptly escorted off the premises in police handcuffs, and suspended from school pending expulsion.

Because of his excellent family background, the police could see no reason to detain Kinkel. He displayed no signs of the seething anger that must have been building up inside him, and they sent him home. (He shot his mother in the chest after helping her with the shopping, then shot his father in the back of the head while he was on the telephone to the National Guard to enquire about places at their nearest juvenile boot camp.) The next morning Kip was picked up by the school security cameras as he accompanied his classmates from the sports field. But since the news of his suspension was confidential, in accordance with state education rules, nobody manning the video monitors was in a position to know that he shouldn't have been there.

Once the shooting was over, the damage was contained as much as possible. A group of students overpowered Kinkel while he tried to change his ammunition clip, the emergency services were

alerted immediately, and the injured children were treated so fast that all, apart from the two who were killed outright, are expected to make a full recovery.

Counselling sessions were immediately organised, involving teachers, parents and psychologists, and contact between members of the school community was maintained over the long summer break. There was even a dance in July, attended by 300 of the school's 1,500 students. By the time the new school year began last week, everyone was ready and classes resumed in an uncannily normal atmosphere. There was no need to get students used to the cafeteria again, since a number of special meetings had already been held there for that purpose. A policeman came out to the staff to bolster security, but this was a measure that had been prepared before the shooting, to put Thurston in line with Springfield High School just a few miles down the road.

The only special event was a small prayer meeting held by a young Christian group on the front lawn. Blue ribbons were also strewn on hedges and on fenceposts as a sign of solidarity with the affected families. The only other thing that was different was the presence of the national media outside the front gate. Larry Bentz hired two private security guards to keep them away from the school fence and broadly succeeded in his aim of restraining over-intrusive reporters.

"While the community watched, waited and worried about us, we carried on a normal school day," says Threya Harvey, a 16-

year-old student. "Television news crews sat outside waiting for a glimpse of a distraught student, while we sat in class taking notes. They went to great lengths to find a story. We went to lunch."

So was Kip Kinkel just a freak case that everyone can now safely put behind them? Larry Bentz prides himself on the fact that there has been no call among parents for higher security or changes in school procedures. Indeed, he believes that the decision to install metal detectors, by some schools in Portland, Oregon's largest city, and elsewhere, is both excessive and wrong.

"We don't want to turn our schools into prisons," he says. "In fact, the statistics show that over the past few years violence in American schools has gone down. Fewer gang activities, fewer drugs. Schools are remarkably safe. I believe the issue is not violence in schools, but violence in society. The people we catch at school with drugs or weapons are the dumb ones. The ones we need to worry about are the ones who carry on these activities outside the school premises."

Beyond such essentially reassuring messages lies a more murky reality; however. The school may not have been directly responsible for Kip Kinkel's killing spree, but the community and his family certainly were. Scratch Springfield's surface a little, and what you find is a city that either refused or was unable to heed clear warning signs and allowed itself to be taken by surprise by a not-altogether surprising set of circumstances.

The conviction that Kip was a good, if troubled, kid from a good all-American family blinded everyone – including his own parents – to his overt destructive tendencies and the sheer lunacy of giving him access to powerful semi-automatic assault weapons.

A difficult, brooding child from an early age, he successfully talked his father into buying him a succession of rifles and pistols – common household toys in hunting-crazy Springfield, even though most are far more lethal than the minimum required to shoot up a few ducks. His father's rationale, according to friends, was that satisfying his request might help the two of them bond better and lift Kip out of his morbid depression.

In January 1997 Kip was arrested for kicking a large rock off

INSIDE	Letters	2	Features	8-9	Fast Track	14	Radio	19	EDUCATION
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1mg

SILK CUT ULTRA IS LOW IS SILK CUT ULTRA

SMOKING WHEN PREGNANT HARMS YOUR BABY

Chief Medical Officers' Warning

1 mg Tar 0.1 mg Nicotine



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HOME NEWS

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Headteacher recruitment crisis

Thousands of schools are being run by temporary heads because of the worst ever headteacher recruitment crisis.

Page 6

Popular boom for retail therapy

Compulsive shopping, where people find they cannot control their buying habits, has more than doubled in the past 20 years and is affecting more men and children than ever before.

Page 8

Tough new rules for wildlife sites

Tough new powers to prosecute landowners who damage Britain's most valuable wildlife sites have been proposed by the Government.

Page 10

FOREIGN NEWS

PAGES 12 - 15

Britain delays Kosovo flight ban

Britain broke ranks with the EU yesterday over plans to punish Serbia for its brutal treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Page 12

Trapped whales mock free Keiko

While millions of dollars are being lavished in an ambitious project to return Keiko to his native Iceland, conservationists are fighting to stop the capture of more killer whales for display in marine parks and aquaria around the world.

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BUSINESS NEWS

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FTSE tumbles as Wall Street falls

World stock markets sustained heavy losses as they followed Wall Street downwards as fears over the future of President Bill Clinton unnerved investors.

Page 16

Centrica targets 4m customers

Centrica, the gas giant, aims to capture 4 million electricity customers and pay shareholders their first dividend since the demerger from BG.

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SPORTS NEWS

PAGES 23 - 28

Wales calls off hockey match

Wales called off a hockey game against Canada at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur when eight players fell ill with suspected food poisoning.

Page 23

RFU suspends picking referees

The Rugby Football Union has suspended the appointment of referees for this weekend's matches involving Bedford and West Hartlepool.

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FRIDAY REVIEW

28-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

Anatole Lieven

Russia's rulers under Yeltsin have undermined its health to the point where it was bound to succumb to any serious new global financial infection.

Page 4

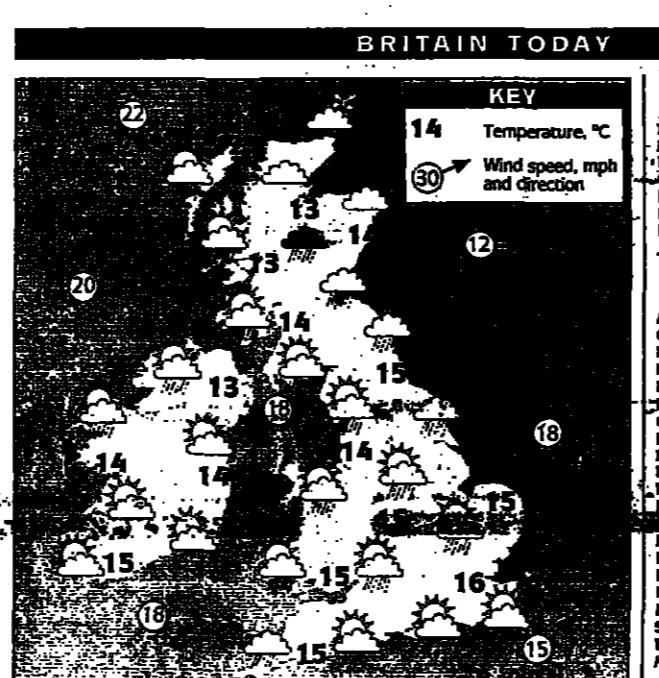
Mary Dejevsky

So long as Mr Clinton's public opinion poll ratings hold up, so long as he is credited with the strength of the US economy and positive national feelings, Congress will be reluctant to move against him.

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Cryptic crossword, section one, page 28

NEWSPAPER SUPPORT
RECYCLINGRecycled paper made up 41% of
the raw material for UK newspapers
in the last half of 1995

LIGHTNING TOP

Belfast	7.51pm	to	6.50am
Shropshire	7.33pm	to	6.36am
Bristol	7.35pm	to	6.40am
Devon	7.45pm	to	6.42am
Dorset	7.47pm	to	6.47am
Durham	7.25pm	to	6.30am
Gloucester	7.35pm	to	6.37am
Hampshire	7.43pm	to	6.33am

For 24hrs to 2pm Thursday

HIGH TIDES

AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	10.21	13.0	11.46
Cork	9.39	4.6	10.08
Devonport	9.32	3.6	10.03
Dorset	2.57	4.6	5.17
Dover	3.22	4.4	3.57
Falmouth	4.34	5.8	4.55
Gibraltar	3.34	4.1	4.06
Holyhead	2.49	3.6	3.42
Hull	1.17	3.0	10.45
Isle of Wight	0.02	2.1	10.57
London	6.35	5.8	5.11
Portsmouth	10.28	6.8	10.49
Southampton	9.18	6.8	9.57
Swindon	11.04	2.0	11.20
Torquay	3.13	4.7	3.45
Weymouth	12.18	4.8	12.45
Weymouth	12.18	4.8	12.45
Weymouth	3.12	5.6	3.45

Height, measured in metres

AIR QUALITY

Today's readings

London	N0 ₂	O ₃
S England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

Sun rises:	06.29
Sun sets:	19.25
Moon rises:	22.26
Moon sets:	12.41
Last Quarter:	13 Sept

Sunrises and sunsets in local time

24 hours to 6pm (GMT) Wed:

Information by PA WeatherCentre

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecast dial 0800 8009 0009 followed by the two digits for your area. Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

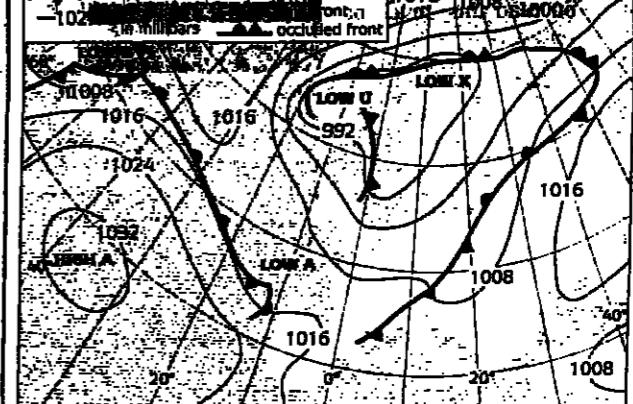
Winnipeg: Marham, Norfolk 21°C (70°F)
Coldcast: (diag): Fair Isle 12°C (54°F)
Coldest: Lake Vyrnwy 0.8°C (36°F)
Sunniest: St Ives, Cornwall 9.2 hrs (5.2 hrs)
For 24hrs to 2pm Thursday

Sea Rain Max
hrs in °C °F

Aberdeen	5.7	0.04	19	65
Ayresome	1.8	0.08	17	63
Belfast	2.0	0.02	19	63
Bolton	3.5	0.43	18	64
Birmingham	3.7	0.25	19	65
Bromsgrove	3.7	0.25	19	65
Bristol	5.6	0.08	20	68
Buxton	3.0	0.42	17	63

THE WORLD

EUROPE NOON TODAY



Low U sink southwards, but Low X will be slow moving. Low A will lose its identity as Low B edges only slowly east. High A remains almost stationary.

The World Yesterday

Adelaide	c 19	65	Cape Town	c 13	55	Perth	c 26	75
Alghero	c 32	95	Carlsbad	c 16	61	Las Vegas	c 28	82
Antarctica	c 60	65	London	c 15	67	Madrid	c 23	65
Antarctica	c 60	65	Paris	c 15	67	Paris	c 28	82
Antarctica	c 13	55	Rome	c 21	75	Rome	c 24	75
Antarctica	c 13	55	Stockholm	c 16	61	Stockholm	c 28	82
Antarctica	c 13	55	Tokyo	c 21	75	Tokyo	c 28	82
Antarctica	c 13	55	Vienna	c 16	61	Vienna	c 28	82

Cloudy digitized: 0100, 0200, 0300, 0400, 0500, 0600, 0700, 0800, 0900, 1000, 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, 1900, 2000, 2100, 2200, 2300, 2400, 2500, 2600, 2700, 2800, 2900, 3000, 3100, 3200, 3300, 3400, 3500, 3600, 3700, 3800, 3900, 4000, 4100, 4200, 4300, 4400, 4500, 4600, 4700, 4800, 4900, 5000, 5100, 5200, 5300, 5400, 5500, 5600, 5700, 5800, 5900, 6000, 6100, 6200, 6300, 6400, 6500, 6600, 6700, 6800, 6900, 7000, 7100, 7200, 7300, 7400, 7500, 7600, 7700, 7800

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Murdoch must not be allowed to gain a media stranglehold

RUPERT MURDOCH'S bid for Manchester United has stirred up a good deal of ugly emotion. The issue needs a calmer look. Sky has put tens of millions of pounds into football, far more than the previous gentlemen's agreements in terrestrial TV yielded for the sport. More football is broadcast than ever before, partly owing to competition from the satellite broadcaster. Football is booming in Britain.

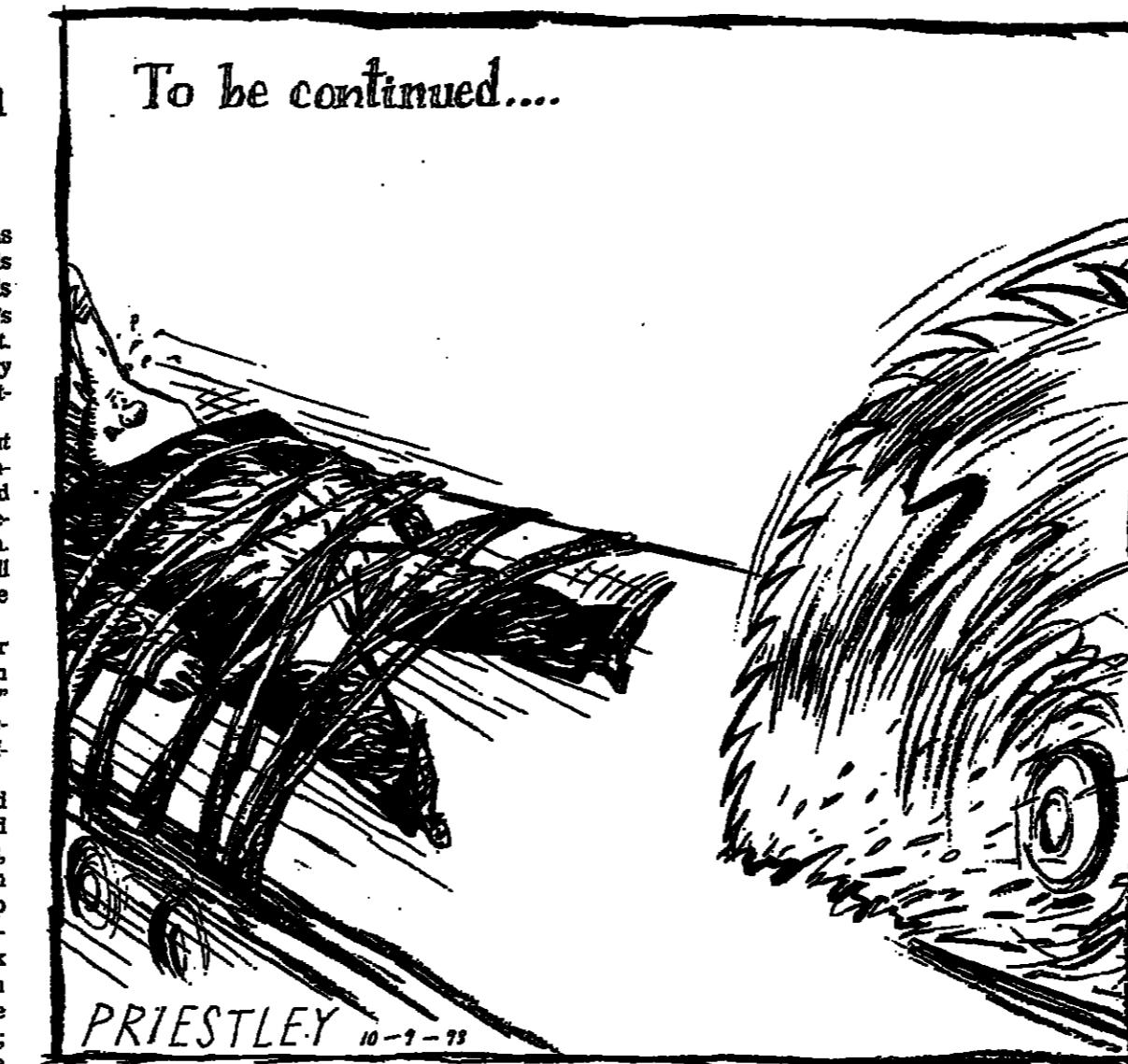
Yet there are real, rational questions to be asked about the wisdom of allowing Murdoch to buy the clubs themselves – especially as he is attempting to buy the brand leader. True, money is no guarantee of footballing success; it has done Alan Sugar little good at Tottenham. But anyone wooed by Murdoch's promises should recall the promises of editorial independence that he broke when he bought *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*.

Those who think that he will allow United to go their own way should also look at the coverage of his bid in *The Sun*, which splashed the headline "Gold Trafford" on its front page. The Murdoch empire is not characterised by freedom for its constituent parts: Old Trafford will be simply one part of a grander design.

This raises the core question of monopoly. If United is not free to go about its business, then it will be used to promote the interests of Murdoch's media outlets, especially the jewel in its crown, Sky television. When the television contract for the Premiership comes up for renewal in 2002, it will be open for Murdoch to influence the decision of the FA. By threatening to walk away from any deal, perhaps to a proposed European super-league, Murdoch will possess a veto. United is the largest, best supported and richest club in the League; otherwise Murdoch would not have wanted to buy it. The Premiership would mean little without it; other clubs might be forced to give in to Sky's demands.

This would represent an unhealthy amount of vertical integration in the television sports industry; Murdoch would effectively control the product from beginning to end. Competition, which Sky opened up, would be choked off; access to the most popular sport in the country would be dominated by one man. Anyone who has witnessed the chaos Sky's dictates have visited upon Rugby League, such as moving it to the summer, will shudder at the thought.

The advent of cable television, with the proliferation of channels this will bring, is a precious opportunity to increase choice for the viewer. The Monopolies and



Mergers Commission should consider just how much a Murdoch-owned United will narrow that choice, and reject the bid. This is not just about football; it is also about control of the media.

There is also a political aspect. For one thing, it matters more to millions of voters than all the party politics they see in Parliament; it is still an activity that binds the country together. The Government must also decide who its real friends are. Up until now, ministers have seemed to believe that Murdoch can be won round to their views, especially on Europe, by persuasion. They must be beginning to realise that this will never happen. In that situation, New Labour cannot allow a

fruitless search for one man's favour to prejudice its views on decisions of national importance. If the MMC were to recommend the rejection of the United deal, it would provide the Government with a wonderful opportunity to show that it can stand up to Murdoch.

The Government is starting to look tarnished: Blair's reputation for trustworthiness is fading, and he is increasingly seen as aloof and arrogant. If it were to obey the wishes of a media magnate who wants a stranglehold on one of the most popular viewing choices in the country, its standing would fail further. If government does not exist to fight monopolies and vested interests, and to open up choices for citizens, what is it for?

Must we keep on slaughtering all of our political leaders?



DAVID AARONOVITCH

Mr Blair is loathed – I encounter nothing but the deepest cynicism about him and all his works

Major ever did anything right then you wouldn't have found out in the press. (This newspaper was, naturally, an honourable exception.)

For nearly 20 years we were scared witless by Mrs T, but then in came hapless John, and after Black Wednesday we practically ran the show. We saw off old Meller (despite the fact that he was a good minister) and forced the removal of a whole succession of bonking Tories. We took six Europhobic rebels and paraded their views relentlessly in every bulletin and edition. In the last year Blair has annoyed us by failing to fire Geoffrey Robinson when we told him to.

But the biggest problem with the way politics is discussed in this country is that we are averse to talking the adult language of choice; we prefer the baby gabble of "I want" and "gimme".

I was not surprised to be told that the gathering was long on crit and short on alternative. Blair had, they agreed, capitulated to the now discredited system of free market capitalism. And instead, he should...

There is little encouragement, in our public discourse, of candour about the dilemmas faced by those who govern. The thing that we desire is always somehow cost-free. The minimum wage will lead to no unemployment, nurses must have much more money, waiting-lists should come down. And where shall we find the cash? Easy. Something must be done about BSE in lambs; nothing must be done about beef on the bone; fox-hunting must be banned; dangerous dogs shouldn't have been. And so on. Each decision is presented as hermetically sealed from consequence.

It is interesting in this light to consider *The Guardian's* claim that its poll "also shows Britain as a country which favours higher taxes to pay for better public services". It doesn't. In fact, the poll asked respondents to agree or disagree with this statement: "It is better to pay higher taxes [note the passive case here] and have better public services, than [have] lower taxes and worse public services." Remarkably, one fifth of those polled disagreed with this utterly consensual sentiment.

Such wishful thinking also afflicts intellectuals. Last weekend saw a conference, under the ambit of the now-defunct journal *Moscow Today*, dedicated to discuss the world and Tony's place in it. (For some reason I was not invited; the organisers have obviously never read *The Sleeping Beauty*).

I was not surprised to be told that the gathering was long on crit and short on alternative. Blair had, they agreed, capitulated to the now discredited system of free market capitalism. And instead, he should...

Cherish opera, but don't spoil it

OPERA IS a great art form, and attracts the same level of devotion from its fans as football. Too often it is sneered at by people, including politicians and journalists, who have no interest in seeing it performed; great opera is an uplifting aesthetic experience.

Yet the love of opera has also been the problem with the Royal Opera House. To love the form is not the same thing as to believe that it deserves millions of pounds each year from public coffers, or that it should be administered by well-intentioned fools. Love of opera blinded people to the ridiculous shortcomings of the ROH for too long, and attracted the wrong characters to administer it.

Yesterday's decision to shut the Royal Opera House completely for 12 months is a good one – it needs a clean break, a sweep-out of personnel, precedents and traditions, and then, it is to be hoped, a completely new beginning. The question is: what kind of beginning should it be? There are several shining examples of opera companies around the world which survive perfectly well without subsidies by attracting corporate sponsorship. But the main other difference between the Met in New York, for instance, and the Royal Opera House is the perception in this country that opera is an elitist pastime enjoyed only by toffs and snobs. This belief is self-fulfilling.

For the ROH to break the Catch 22, attract again the sponsorship that has bled away in recent years and, more, then strike out without state help (for it is snobbish to suggest that opera is somehow uniquely needful of subsidies), a new and striking competence is crucial. But it is also important to allow the rehabilitated opera house to find its own level in the marketplace. If this means small-scale productions to begin with, so be it – good quality doesn't necessarily imply "expensive", and it may find that its audiences grow naturally (so long as the musicians are top-class) as a result of a new image and judicious advertising.

The success of Glyndebourne shows what can be done when a company embraces the nature of its product imaginatively. Let's hope that when "Son of the Royal Opera House" arrives it has a better business head than its predecessor – and is forced to use it.

Sprouts of enterprise

SO GLAXO and Barnados have cast themselves in the role of nanny, and have launched a £3m scheme to make children eat their greens. Perhaps for £3m they might also cut the lawn and wash the car?

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"An act of cardinal folly."

David Mellor,
Football Task Force chairman,
on the decision of Manchester United shareholders
to accept the BSkyB offer for their club

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We are inclined to believe those whom we do not know because they have never deceived us."

Samuel Johnson,
man of letters

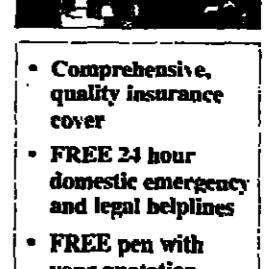
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ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
Reaction to Mark McGwire's baseball home run record



media from around the world. The family of the man whose record he would break. Despite it all, McGwire was undaunted by the occasion. He delivered in the face of it all, like the great athlete he's made himself.

The Dallas Morning News

McGWIRE'S FEAT has meant a great deal to St Louis, naturally. There is a great sense of pride that the great American hero of the moment plays in our city. And he loves us, his fans in

the great American outback! We are, for a moment, no longer black and white, Asian, Latino, Amerindian; no longer male or female, homosexual or heterosexual; Christian, Jew or Muslim; rich or poor; urban or suburban – we are all St Louisans, wildly celebrating our hero. He is representative of us all. And it is in such moments that a place like St Louis becomes a true community, a house of many mansions, but one spirit.

The St Louis Post-Dispatch

NO MATTER how reluctant McGwire is to be the singer in the spotlight, his thunderous swings produce the sort of prodigious home runs that have turned him into a larger-than-life figure. Every fan loves watching baseballs rocket out of stadiums, so every fan has rallied to McGwire's prowess as he has slipped into his crouch uncalled and crushed another pitch. Especially this season, McGwire's captivating run to history culminated on Tuesday night when he belted his 62nd

home to eclipse Roger Maris's hallowed 57-year-old record for the most in one season. *The New York Times*

OVER THE past three seasons, in which he has hit 172 homers, the 34-year-old McGwire has established himself as the most prodigious slugger since Ruth. But he has also become, perhaps, the most open, demonstrative and sharing slugger since Ruth, as well. That kind of emotional largess came naturally to Ruth. For McGwire, it

has been hard won – through a divorce, career-threatening injuries, horrible season-long slumps and several years of therapy.

The Washington Post

WHAT McGWIRE did was anything but easy, especially as the attention mounted to the crescendo [sic] it reached in the past two days in his home park. There were the fans. The mass

PANDORA

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S press secretary, Mike McCurry, resigned recently. He will soon be replaced by his White House assistant, Joe Lockhart, a former Sky News broadcaster. Needless to say, being spokesman for a President who is a confessed liar is going to be challenging, but Lockhart seems to have a streak of unusual candour: He told yesterday's *Washington Post*, "Most of my friends think I'm out of my mind. I can't build a compelling case that they're wrong."

NEIL HAMILTON, ex-Tory MP and victim of the cash-for-questions affair, is no longer a member of the Conservative Party, so there's no question of his attending its Bournemouth conference. However, the thought of making mischief has crossed his mind. He told one of Pandora's colleagues this week: "I may go with my bucket and spade, and sit in the middle of the beach. The delegates will need some light entertainment."

YOU MIGHT expect to see a drug-sniffing sniffer dog at the arrival gate of a flight from Bogotá, but not at the top of the escalator in your local Northern Line underground station. On Tuesday evening, in London's Camden Town, homeward-bound commuters were indiscriminately sniffed and surveyed by a crowd of uniformed British Transport police. One officer told Pandora that they weren't chasing a particular criminal: "This is part of a new general initiative, cracking down on crime all over the system." The dogs are trained to smell a number of illegal drugs, including lingering traces up to 24 hours after possession. "If the dog reacts, we will search the person," promised the policeman. But, according to Chief Inspector W McCafferty of the British Transport Police, "We go to locations based on intelligence. We don't just turn up anywhere." In other words, Camden Town, but not Golders Green. Several lawyers Pandora contacted thought there was a civil liberties issue here. "The indiscriminate use of police tracker dogs," says Adrian Clarke of Bindman & Partners, "has the effect of circumventing these important protections and, as such, amounts to a worrying breach of civil liberties." The British Transport Police are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport, so

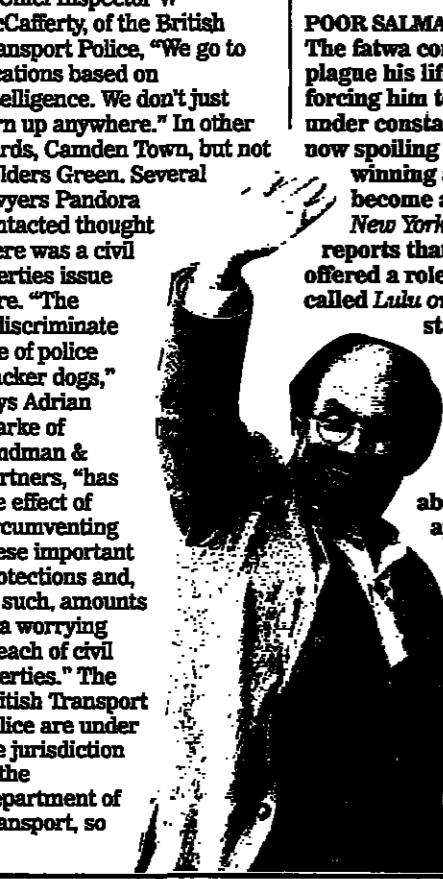
Pandora rang John Prescott's office. They've promised to look into the matter. We'll keep you posted.

AS RUMOURS swirl about the possible curtailment of the televised party political broadcast, a new video called *Party Political Broadcasts: The Greatest Hits* is about to be released by Westminster's Politics bookstore. It runs to three hours and carries more than 40 broadcasts. Pandora suspects that one viewing ought to be enough to convince anyone that PPBs should be abolished for ever.

PANDORA'S STORY on Tuesday about Chaka Khan has outraged the World Entertainment News Network, which cut the quote from its broadcast, but not its newswire service. Yesterday, Jonathan Ashby of WENN faxed the editor of this newspaper to say the story was "a gross slur on WENN's reputation" as "a news network of some integrity". He elaborated, "During the course of the taped interview with Chaka... Chaka made the emotive comment about Bill Clinton's dick, included in *The Independent* report today, but Hannah [WENN's interviewer] was forced by Chaka's PR to rewind the tape and erase it... [He threatened] to terminate the interview there and then if Hannah didn't agree."

Pandora salutes this fine example of journalistic integrity, knowing how frightening those rock music PRs can be. After threatening to sue us, Ashby closed with a charming solicitation: "I would suggest that *The Independent* becomes a regular subscriber to our entertainment news wire service in order to obtain great stories like this." Sounds irresistible.

POOR SALMAN Rushdie. The fatwa continues to plague his life, not only forcing him to live in secret under constant guard, but now spoiling the prize-winning author's bid to become a film star. The *New York Daily News* reports that Rushdie was offered a role in a film called *Lulu on the Bridge* starring Harvey Keitel and Mira Sorvino. While the film's insurers had no qualms about Rushdie's appearing on set, several of the film crew expressed doubts about security and the unions got involved. It seems that the part may go to the actor Willem Dafoe.



An abject lesson in dumbing-down

SUSAN KARLIN

Britain is getting the American habit of blaming a little square box for all society's ills

WHILE BRITAIN fights to save that great institution, *News at Ten*, from relocating to the slum of the TV schedule, 6.30pm, here are a few words of solace on the occasion of possible defeat.

America has aired network news at 6.30pm for years – sometimes even earlier. And we have found that having an ill-informed population never hurt us. We still get out and bomb the occasional country. That's how American youngsters learn their geography. Besides, as soon as we started dumbing down our entertainment, it became our top export. There's money in stupidity.

In fact, one network here, ABC, created a whole promotional campaign based on how dumb TV is. It had slogans like, "Don't worry, you've got billions of brain cells" and "Without TV, how would you know where to put the sofa?" This

campaign was considered controversial, mainly by people whose lives were already going down the cathode ray tube. To me, it seemed rather practical. That way, if ABC's shows stink, they fitted its image.

It stands to reason that smart TV creates smart people. Just ask John Major. A spearhead of an earlier *Save News at Ten* movement, he managed to rescue ITV from the

perils of going downmarket, but still raised a son who wants to marry a girl who appears at awards' shows semi-naked.

Besides, early evening newscasts haven't destroyed America's sense of what's important. For very urgent, pertinent issues, news producers enjoy the dramatic flourish of breaking into regularly scheduled programmes to feature our Great Leader apologising for his extra-curricular activities. Unless there's a well-known athlete-turned-actor on trial for a double murder. Then they'll split the screen.

While British TV seems to be following the American model of more lucrative scheduling, it's heart-warming also to note your government adopting our politicians' habit of blaming a little square box for society's ills. Except that Americans don't worry about TV making people

dumb. They worry about TV making people violent. Or promiscuous. Our focus is more financially driven. Couch potatoes don't use tax dollars. Criminals and single teenage mothers do. So, here, the big outcry is about warning parents that the episode of *Friends* that their child is about to watch could turn him or her into a social pariah.

But it doesn't matter. The main thing is to drum into our heads the absolute corruptive power of the tube. This ignores the fact that there are video-recorders, and even broadsheets, for getting the news at other times, or that parental guidance and education enter into this equation. Although anyone smart knows that school is no longer the key to a livelihood. A rap album is.

And if Tony Blair thinks TV is dumbing down now, wait until there are 200 channels. If you don't believe me, the next time you're in the States, tune in to The Food Network. There's a cooking show for dogs. Really. The airwaves of 1998 will be remembered as a virtual Mensa convention.

Sadly, this is one time when Britain's fondness for tradition will probably bow to the economic realities of running a TV business today, where ratings rule over content. Only on lucky, rare occasions can you get both. Perhaps, in time, Britain will adjust and grow to enjoy the same vapid, short attention spans that make America the great culture it is today. Besides, it's not as if you're abolishing the Page 3 girl.

But if people are truly unhappy with the direction of British TV, I may be the wrong person to advise. Whenever I've craved decent television Stateside, I've watched shows from the BBC.

Privatise the Royal Opera House, or nationalise it



GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT

It is now clear that Covent Garden has somehow, somewhere gone horribly wrong

In Berlin, they used to say at the turn of the century, the situation is serious but not hopeless. In Vienna, the situation is hopeless but not serious. The joke applies to the Royal Opera House over the past few years, except that it's tempting to say that in that period it has gone from one to the other: first serious but not hopeless, now hopeless but not serious.

The latest news that the ROH is to close "in its present form" next January and reopen – perhaps, and if things work out – at the end of the year is not only startling, it asks larger questions that seem to be raised by any of those concerned, notably Sir Colin Southgate, chairman of the ROH, and Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, about public subsidy of the arts and its justification.

Ten weeks ago, Sir Richard Eyre's report recommended a much increased subsidy, and firmly dismissed the idea of privatising Covent Garden. But actions – and inactions – speak louder than words, and the lamentable story suggests that almost any dispensation would be better than the present one.

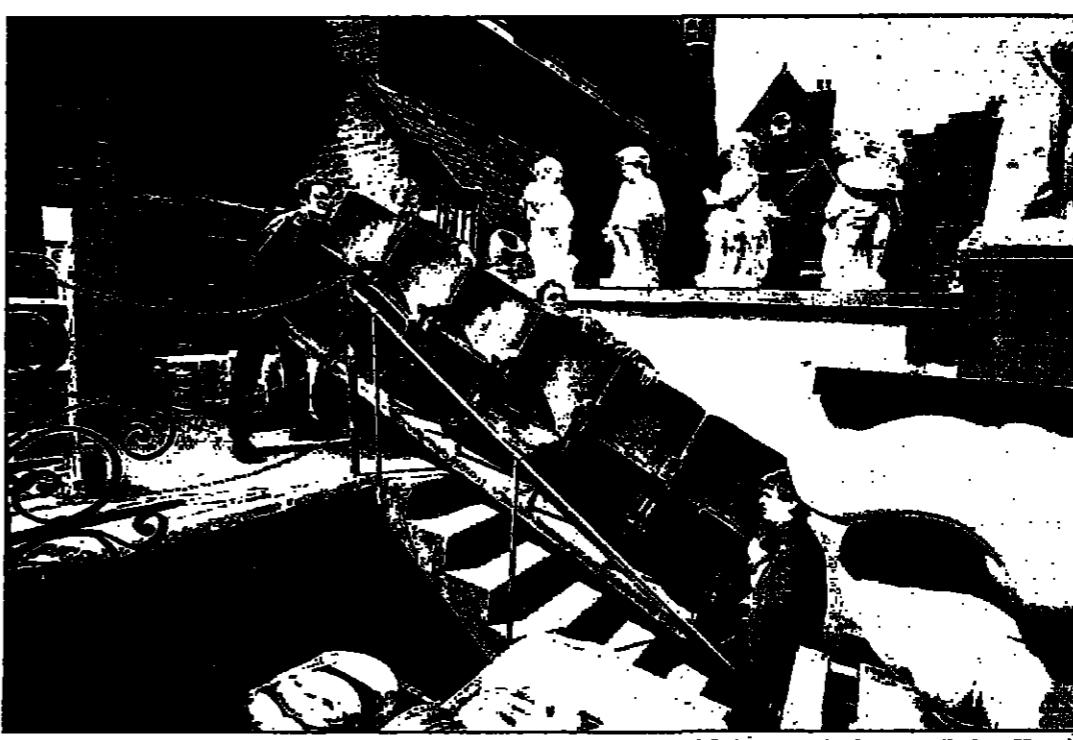
The closure of Covent Garden for rebuilding has turned into a gruesome chapter of accidents. Last year, Sir Jeremy Isaacs retired as general director of the ROH, although there was a lengthy overlap, at the taxpayer's expense, with his successor, Genista McIntosh. But she was only in place for a few months before she left, her departure not made less mysterious by the thoroughly unconvincing explanations offered.

Then her successor, Mary Allen, was appointed in puzzling circumstances, arrived, and stayed only months before leaving. A staff vote of no confidence in a senior ROH executive was passed (and leaked), a union representative was suspended, and the vote was withdrawn. A new head of education was appointed, but broke all recent Covent Garden records – impressive as they were – by being sacked on the day she arrived. And people complain that the plots of operas like *La forza del destino* are implausible. It was hard to imagine the

baroque plot thickening further, but it did with yesterday's announcement. Southgate said that in view of the "unmanageable deficit, no proper financial information and ineffective management structure", he and his colleagues on the board propose a complete break. Even then, the company will only reopen after new staff agreements "negotiated in line with a reduced workforce", which is management-speak for mass redundancies.

To be fair to Southgate, he did inherit intractable problems. The ROH is a wonderland of overstaffing, union obscurantism and old Spanish customs (of a kind unknown to those famous Spaniards Don Giovanni and Figaro) reminiscent of Fleet Street 20 years ago.

But the closure, drastic as it is, may be almost by the way. What is now clear beyond adventure, is that sometime ROH director Lord Goodman might have said, is not only that Covent Garden's management has somehow, somewhere gone horribly wrong but that a larger system has failed: the relationship between ROH, Arts Council, government – and the taxpayer. Not only the ROH but the whole "arm's length" system of arts funding has long been regarded as a source of national pride. But should it be? Why is it so obviously right that the Government should give money unconditionally to an Arts Council



Original fittings stripped from the old Opera House, along with its reputation Brian Harris

which disfigures it as it sees fit?

The Eyre report recommended,

among other things, an increase of

£26m a year in subsidy,

about which Mr Smith has main-

tained a silence. And it dismissed out

of hand the idea of withdrawing all

subsidy and letting the ROH take its

chances in the market.

Actually, the argument for pri-

vatization is perfectly good, not only

in "right-wing" terms, and is too easily

dismissed by the chattering classes

and those Sir Trevor Nunn likes

to call "the hives". A contradiction

is too rarely pointed out. Most of

those chatters at once consider

themselves on the liberal left and

favour heavy state subsidy of institu-

tions like the Royal National

Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare

Company, and the Royal Opera

House.

And yet it is perfectly obvious that all public subsidy of "the arts" repre-

sents a net transfer of resources

from poor to rich. In this respect,

Thatchite philistines who sneer at

the whole idea of subsidising poots

to prance on stage are more honest than lefty luvvies.

I have been attending the Royal opera for more than 30 years, often enough with rapturous enjoyment, but sometimes with a troubled conscienc-

e also. Here we sit, the stalls largely occupied by merchant bankers engaged in "corporate

entertainment", and almost all of

the audience well above the national

average income, listening to a

soprano who is paid £5,000 for three

hours' singing, all of which is largely

paid for by the taxes of labourers in

Scunthorpe or Southampton. Is this

social justice?

What's more, there is a shining

existential argument for privatisa-

tion 50 miles from Bow Street. The

new house at Glyndebourne is not

only the most beautiful theatre built

in Europe since the war; it was built

on time and within budget, a contrast

indeed to most large public projects

in recent decades. And it was built,

as Glyndebourne has always been

run, with no taxpayer's money.

That is one logical and hon-

orable path. The other is to follow Sir Richard's advice and increase subsidy in line with comparable opera houses in Europe – but to do so by "direct rule", forgetting about the arm's length which is really a constitutional monstrosity, as Aneurin Bevan called the nationalised corporations.

The greatest irony is that amid these managerial fiascos, the Royal Opera as an artistic enterprise yes, it is one, however easy that sometimes is to forget) is at a pinnacle of success. Three weeks ago I was in Edinburgh where the Royal Opera gave two Verdi operas. *Luisa Miller*, in concert performance under Mark Elder, was splendid; *Don Carlos*, under the Royal Opera's heroic, loyal and baffled musical director Bernard Haitink, wasn't splendid, it was utterly magnificent.

He returns in two weeks to conduct the company in *The Ring* at the Albert Hall. I trust the directors of the ROH will be more than usually stimulated by Wagner's great parable of greed, intrigue and treachery.



PODIUM

KATE PARMINTER
From a speech to the Local Government Association by the director of the Council for the Protection of Rural England

Let me be clear about what I mean. I mean that no Regional Planning Guidance, Structure or Local Plan should be prepared without a comprehensive study of the potential to increase the use of urban land and buildings. That will make a reality of the Government's target of at least 60 per cent of future housing taking place on brownfield sites. Nothing less will do.

Let me also give the Chancellor a free piece of advice. Gordon – harmonise VAT rates on newly built and converted houses. This would reduce the current incentive developers have to build on greenfield sites. By doing that, the November "Green Budget" really will be green!

A vision for a sustainable countryside demands a commitment to urban regeneration. As such, CPRE was delighted that the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, echoed our call in December for an "urban renaissance". We now want urgent action from the Urban Task Force to address the issue of building in our towns in a way that enhances town living.

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Is this the Japanese Tony Blair?

TONY BLAIR would be interested to know how often his name is invoked in Japan. Ever since he called on the Japanese to "do the full Monty", as far as reform was concerned, on a visit here at the beginning of the year, he has been cited as the role model: the politician who can remain popular enough to push through reforms that otherwise might be unacceptable to the voters.

That Japan needs reforms is hardly in doubt. The country is experiencing the worst recession since the Second World War, with forecasts of up to minus 3 per cent growth this year. Japan is not only the world's second largest economy; it also dominates the East Asian economic zone, so any recovery throughout that region depends directly on Japan.

There is a fair measure of agreement that the most urgent of the reforms is to support the banking system, but there is disagreement over the details of how this should be done.

The underlying problem is that there is no consensus about other, deeper reforms: the power of the central government, the power of the civil servants who run the various ministries vis-à-vis the Prime Minister and cabinet, and the changes in the tax and regulatory system in this still highly regulated society. How will the political impetus for change manifest itself?

I have just spent most of a day with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the principal opposition party. It came second to the Liberal Democrats (LDP) in the recent elections, but doubled its vote. As a result, its leader, Naoto Kan, who tops the opinion polls as Japan's most popular politician, is being talked about as the next prime minister; given that they seem to change the office rather frequently, maybe the next but one. Mr Kan himself is cheerful and telegenic, at 51 a different generation from the Liberal Democrat top politicians – and openly admiring of Tony Blair. He met him earlier this year and cited him as a model a couple of times in our conversation. A delegation from the DPJ is going to the UK later this year to see what it can learn from young Blairite party workers.

Mr Kan also talked of Japan facing a change as radical as the Meiji restoration 130 years ago, and the establishing of the present democracy after the Second World War. He wants, he said, to form a cabinet on the UK model. The prime minister would choose the ministers, rather than accepting the people supported by the party and the bureaucrats. Those ministers would have full responsibility for the policies they carried out, rather than rubber-stamping policies agreed, collectively beforehand. He also wants to decentralise power (another Blair parallel) by allowing local government to have much more freedom in allocating resources.



HAMISH MCRAE
IN JAPAN

Some of the people around Mr Kan have even more radical ideas. One of the driving forces behind the party is Yoshito Sengoku, the chief planner, who is the Gordon Brown to Mr Kan's Tony Blair. Mr Sengoku told me that his own aim was to get the top rate of income tax down to 20 per cent. At present it is 65 per cent, and the ruling LDP has a proposal to bring it to 50 per cent. Mr Sengoku reckons that closing all the loopholes would make a cut of this sort credible. Were that to happen, the whole world would be looking to Japan to see if it could pull it off.

What does all this mean? For a start, it is interesting, and a bit of a change, to come from a country that is seen as a model for reform. One of Mr Kan's aides explained: "We see Britain as a success story, and we want to learn from its experience." But that is really more a reflection of the Thatcher reforms than anything Mr Blair has done. Privatisation of public utilities and the London stock market's Big Bang have been directly carried over to Japanese institutions, even if the volume of Big Bang has been somewhat muted in the transmission.

There seem to me, however, to be two areas where the Blair influence is directly relevant to Japan, or indeed the politics of other developed countries.

The obvious one is style. Voters clearly like politicians to appear unstuff, approachable and slick – and ideally to have a good head of hair. It is not just a Blair model; it is also a Clinton one. He admires the US President for the way in which, up to now anyway, he has been able to build support for a broad range of apparently successful policies.

I haven't seen the DPJ adverts, but the posters are stylish and modern. Its party offices are like the new Labour headquarters in Millbank Tower, or a successful software company: white walls, busy young people scurrying about, and banks of computers. The DPJ hasn't yet got its spin-doctoring in order, for Mr Kan was worrying about the difficulty of getting his ideas accurately represented in the Japanese media, but I guess they will get round to it.

The more substantial parallel is the way in which the Blair model (or rather the Clinton/Blair model) stresses what politicians can and cannot do. Instead of saying, "We



Naoto Kan, leader of the Democratic Party of Japan, and tipped to become its next prime minister, sports the word 'success'

have a vision and this is the way it is going to be," the message is more: "We live in a global economy and all governments can do is create a broadly favourable environment in which you can then be a success within it."

In the case of Japan, this translates as: "The bureaucrats do not know best, and our job as politicians is to liberate you, the voters, from them." Deregulation is justified as freeing people from bureaucracy, not letting them be ruled by the markets. It is a practical justification for governments doing less, not an ideological one.

Just as there is a world market for goods, so there seems to be a world market for political ideas. Britain happens to have an exportable product at the moment, the thing everyone wants to buy. What the product in fact consists of is much harder to gauge. Japan has a tradition of importing ideas, modifying them and improving on them.

It is an intriguing notion that Japan might be able to buy UK reforms, and then improve on them. It would, so to speak, be buying a bundle of Thatcher policies, but given a more compassionate, human face by Tony Blair.

We put it to Mr Kan that Japan really needed a Thatcher before it could have a Blair. He leapt to his feet, and ruffed around in his bookshelf for his current reading. It was, he said, a biography of Margaret Thatcher.

No, Japan is not going to get a set of reforms pushed down from above by a conviction politician. Whatever happens, even if Mr Kan does win power in the next election, there will have to be a reasonable level of general agreement before radical reform can be carried through. He would, he said, have to make the direction of reform clear, but there

would have to be discussion on it. It is almost as though he is hunting for that elusive animal, the Third Way. Can you get the benefits of efficiency that the market can bring, and still protect the weak from its harsher effects? Radical change always hurts someone. Can you get people to agree to be hurt?

Maybe in Japan you can – I don't know. But I am sure that it is very much in our self-interest in the UK that Japan should recover, in both political and economic terms. And if the Blair model can help it along the way, then we should be glad to have been helpful.

RIGHT OF REPLY

MIKE GAPES



A Labour MP responds to Ken Livingstone's case for proportional representation

KEN LIVINGSTONE'S eulogy for the German and New Zealand electoral systems and his praise of Roy Jenkins (9 September) are bizarre. I think he has allowed his hatred of the current Labour leadership to warp his sense of political reality.

Has Ken forgotten that when Europe's longest-serving leader, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and the Christian Democrats first came to power in 1982, it was not because of a general election victory. The German Liberals changed sides, and put him into power without an election by betraying their Social Democratic coalition partners. Their leader, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, kept his job as Foreign Minister.

Paddy Ashdown hopes that, with the help of Jenkins (another politician with personal experience of deserting former allies), he may succeed in his ambition to become the Hans-Dietrich Genscher of British politics. Ken Livingstone's proposal would help him do that.

Ken Livingstone also praises New Zealand, but that is a poor example. Their new system led to the break-up of the Labour Party.

I hope the Jenkins Commission sees the overriding importance of keeping the link between MP and constituency. There are only two ways to do that and also ensure that each MP elected secures a majority of preferences. One system is called the "Alternative Vote", the other the "Supplementary Vote". They keep the link between MPs and constituents and ensure extremists or opportunists cannot hold the balance of power.

I agree with Ken that a party list top-up is not acceptable, but nor is his best loser list. Both would act as a Trojan horse for Paddy Ashdown and threaten Labour's unity. Is that what Ken wants?

In favour of Deep Earthers

PAUL DAVIES has been writing excellent books about science for so long that it is hard to believe that he is still getting better. But on this evidence, he is. I approached *The Fifth Miracle* with a little trepidation. It is subtitled "the search for the origin of life", and there is something of a tradition among eminent astronomers and physicists that, once they reach a certain age, their thoughts turn to semi-philosophical mysteries in the mistaken hope that such a soft subject must be easier than the physics which is now too taxing for their brains.

The results can be embarrassing. But Davies succeeds not only in being provocative and controversial, but in maintaining the rigorous scientific approach of the physicist. He also uses



THURSDAY BOOK

THE FIFTH MIRACLE

BY PAUL DAVIES. ALLEN LANE, PENGUIN PRESS, £18.99

his writing skills to bring a fascinating but largely unsung idea into the limelight.

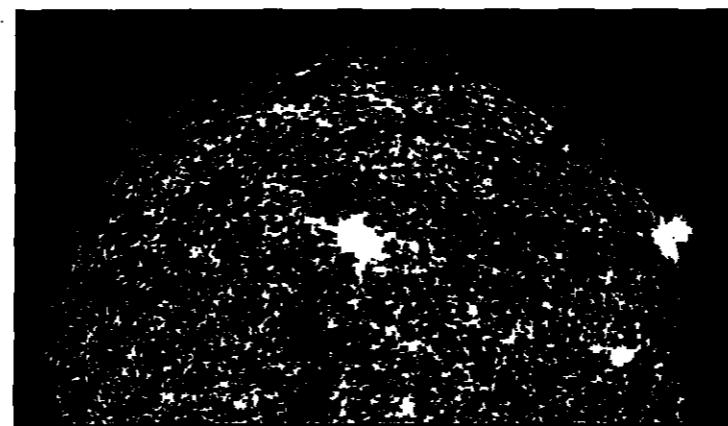
The theme of *The Fifth Miracle* is not so much how life came into being, or even what life is (although Davies offers as neat a summary of its meaning as you could hope to see), but rather where life can exist – in particular, where life can originate.

The key to life, at this level, is a flow

of energy from a hotter system to a cooler one. Life on Earth today exists because the Sun is hot and the surface of the Earth is cool. The shift of energy from the Sun to the Earth implies that the thermodynamic quantity known as entropy, which is inversely related to the existence of complexity and information, can decrease on the surface of the Earth even though it always increases in the universe at large. Interesting things can happen on the surface of the Earth because elsewhere things are getting more and more boring as the stars die. Eventually, the Sun will be a burnt-out cinder at the same temperature as its surroundings.

Using this kind of physical insight, Davies pounces on the recent discovery of bacteria that live in the depths of the ocean. They feed off the entropy flow associated with underwater volcanic vents, and off other superheats that seem to exist deep within the "solid" Earth (actually, honeycombed with microscopic pores). Their existence is revealed by, among other things, the deep-drilling programmes of the oil explorers.

But perhaps "pounces" is the wrong word. Rather, after introducing the idea of the relationship between life and thermodynamics, Davies sidles round the back of his main theme, introducing us to the genetic code and to traditional ideas about the origin of life. He prepares the ground so that his dramatic suggestion that life began "hot and deep" – far below the surface of the young Earth, where it was protected from the battering that took



The temperature gradient from Sun to Earth is the foundation of life

place at the planet's surface as debris from the formation of the solar system rained down – seems both natural and compelling.

The key step in this preparation involves a thorough discussion of the difficulties of the conventional view that life on Earth originated in what Charles Darwin called a "warm little pond" at the surface of the planet. J.B.S. Haldane elaborated this idea to encompass the entire primordial ocean, in a condition he memorably described as having "the consistency of hot dilute soup". Davies clearly spells out the problems with the primordial soup hypothesis, before offering his alternative.

The argument is beautifully constructed, and quite persuasive. It happens that I am not persuaded, even though I share Davies's doubts about the primordial soup. This is because I find the evidence for a cosmic origin of life, in the clouds of material between the stars, even more compelling. Large-scale because of the immense amount of time offered by this scenario for life to emerge.

The cosmic connection has been promoted by another eminent as-

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THURSDAY POEM

PROLOGUE
BY GREG GLAZNER

How do you approach the bowl of milk hardened in the early light like porcelain?

Or address the other face
at the table, poised hopefully
before Good Morning, without drowsing her into numbness
like a dozen-year habit of a man?

Or stand before the medicine cabinet,
the angular little figure of light at your feet,
looking through your own eyes,
the rings of bone sharpened around them, backed
by the sheetrock wall, and sense

where it is the years have drifted you,
what unconscious ocean offers up
the hard little boat of your flesh?

Our poems today and tomorrow come from Greg Glazner's second collection, 'Singularity' (W.W. Norton, £8.50)

Albert Eggler

IT WAS in 1956, when the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research in Zurich organised their second expedition to Mount Everest, that Alfred Eggler was invited to lead a party of ten of the country's top climbers.

The expedition, spread over a period of four months, was a complete success. The second and third ascents of Everest (8848m high) were made by two parties of two climbers on 23 and 24 May, as well as the first ascent of the neighbouring 8511m Lhotse - the fourth highest mountain in the world - on 16 May by a third two-man party. The arrival of the monsoon on 26 May prevented a third attempt on Everest by a summit-party in which Eggler himself had intended to participate.

Born in Brienz at the foot of the Bernese Oberland in 1913, Eggler first visited the mountains as a small boy in the footsteps of his father, a keen skier, and he took up skiing in earnest whilst at school. His mountaineering career began during his student days at Bern University, where he studied law, and in 1934 he was elected to the exclusive Academischer Alpen Club of Bern. From then on, accompanied by friends, many of whom were experienced mountaineers, he climbed most of the classic Alpine routes; on honeymoon after his first marriage, he and his wife ascended the Zmutt ridge of the Matterhorn, returning in time to attend a dance at Zermatt the same evening.

Eggler had a distinguished career in Switzerland's militia army (something every Swiss man has to take part in up to the age of 50), serving for a total of 2,000 days, and rising to the rank of Major. He was Commandant of army mountain training camps in summer and winter; and in 1965 he was appointed chief of the Army Avalanche Service. Many of his colleagues during those years became lifelong friends.

For many years he was attached to the Federal Tax Administration as a lawyer, later setting up his own legal practice in Bern, from which he finally retired in 1987. He was a prominent member of the Liberal party, and a member of his local city council. With his wide mountaineering interests he was elected President of the Central Committee of the Swiss Alpine Club from 1964

to 1967, of the Union Internationale des Associations Alpines from 1968 to 1972, and of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research from 1987 to 1993. He was an honorary member of the Swiss Alpine Club, and also of the Alpine Club London, an honour he prized highly.

It is not given to many men to live a life as active and personally fulfilling as Eggler was able to do for over a decade after his retirement from public life. Devoted to daily physical exercise, including bicycling, hiking and golf, he managed to retain a degree of physical fitness and mental ability remarkable for his years. In his eighties he enjoyed rock climbs in the summer and ski tours in the winter from which, as his wife used to tell him, he always returned looking greatly refreshed and cheerful.

On honeymoon, he and his wife ascended the Z'mutt ridge of the Matterhorn, returning in time to attend a dance at Zermatt the same evening

It was only after he had recovered from an attack of pneumonia in 1997, when it took him 10 hours to climb the 4098m Monch from the Jungfraujoch, that he began to feel his diminished powers, having done the same climb six years earlier in two and three-quarter hours! Slowly down did not however mean an end to weekly excursions in his favourite hills.

During recent years he was a tireless planner of summer and winter expeditions into the mountains he loved, accompanied by close friends, and often by members of his family. He took his great-grandson out to ski with him in January 1998. He was an excellent skier and a very reliable leader, always acquiring in advance a thorough knowledge of the region, of the snow conditions, and of the weather.

Albert Eggler had been looking forward to visiting Ladakh in September, accompanied by his daughter and her husband. His death occurred quite suddenly, when he

slipped while walking down a steep pathway, after a short climb amid familiar hills accompanied by a close friend.

TREVOR BRAHAM

When a highly talented group of Swiss alpinists, including several professional guides ("les Genevois") returned in December 1952 from a second, gallant attempt to make the first ascent of Everest, it was understandable that some of them should entertain doubts about the competence of British "amateurs", albeit with good alpine credentials, to succeed where they had failed, writes John Hunt. The Swiss guide Raymond Lambert and the Nepali sirdar Tenzing Norgay had turned back within about 800 feet of the summit in May of that year; a sec-

ond expedition was forced to retreat in the face of fierce gales in December.

In truth, these two heroic efforts lacked logistical support as well as the backing of supporting parties. Above all, the two expeditions lacked firm leadership, planning and organisational skills which were necessary for them to operate in unison under extreme conditions of altitude, wind and weather.

This was apparent to the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research (Schweizerische Stiftung für Alpine Forschung) which had financed and launched these attempts on the mountain. The foundation decided to make a radical change in the composition and leadership of a third Swiss effort, to be launched in 1956. Albert Eggler, an advocate from Bern and a professional soldier in the Swiss Army, possessed the experience and skills the decisiveness and authority which commanded respect among his friends and team members, chosen from German-



Eggler (right) with John Hunt in the Engelhörner, 1963

ond expedition was forced to retreat in the face of fierce gales in December.

At a centenary meet of our Alpine Club at Zermatt, various Swiss and British climbers traversed the Lyckenmann and followed that delightful climb with a much harder route on the Briehorn (the Klein-Titlis or "Young" ridge). Another year, with Ernst Reiss (who had climbed Lhotse), we made the fifth ascent of a notably hard rock climb which had been pioneered by Reiss: the south-west face of Wellhorn.

One winter, while skiing at Chamonix, Eggler and I, with his daughter Beatrice, made the first recorded mid-winter ascent of the Haute Cime de la Dent du Midi and back to the village, in the course of a short January day. While taking part in the celebrations at Zermatt to mark the centenary of the Swiss Alpine Club, two Swiss "Everesters", Eggler and Luchsinger, with my wife and myself, decided to pay a token tribute to Edward Whymper and his companions who, in 1865, had first climbed the Matterhorn. The weather was atrocious and the mountain heavily covered by fresh snow, yet we ventured

for several hours up the Siss (or Hornli) Ridge, following the footsteps of the pioneers, until we felt satisfied that honour had been done to those heroes.

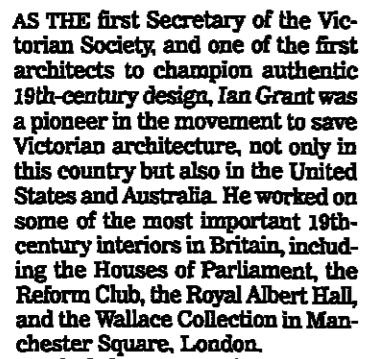
We were thwarted by bad weather on another occasion, when we planned to climb the Eiger by its north east buttress (the "Lauber" route). We had to settle for humbler

fare: the attractive granite ridges above Meiringen (Gleitschorn, Bergseeschijen, Schijenstock and Tellistock). Hard little climbs, but the good company was what mattered.

My final and abiding memory was skiing with Eggler at Mürren. He was accompanied by two adored Tibetan ("Apsos") terriers which, after struggling up the "pistes", were provided with a free ride downhill; their heads visible at the back of their master's rucksack!

Albert Eggler, mountaineer and lawyer: born Brienz, Switzerland 11 June 1913; twice married (one son, two daughters); died Simmenfluh Mountain, Switzerland 25 August 1998.

Ian Grant



Grant's aphoristic advice - 'Do all that is necessary, and as little as possible' - is the epitome of good preservation philosophy

agreed. However, he remained on the committee organising events for the society. A contemporary remembers a visit to Leicestershire, where society members were surrounded by great and good locals, astounded by the group of enthusiasts who had come to study a Victorian country house. Other occasions included a



The Large Gallery of the Wallace Collection, where Grant retained the 19th-century moulded ceiling coves at the same time as lowering the central section to incorporate modern lighting

"Victorian dress show" appropriately staged in his own house, and a visit to Paris. Throughout his life his guided tours were well-attended and converted many to the understanding of good Victorian architecture.

In 1971, he was chosen by Unesco to visit Australia to advise on a policy for that country's rich inheritance

of 19th-century buildings. Clive Lucas, a leading restoration architect and member of the Board of the Australian National Trust, remembers his visit as a turning point in the preservation movement. He cited Grant's aphoristic advice - "Do all that is necessary, and as little as possible" - as the epitome of good

preservation philosophy. Though Grant only visited Australia once again, he found the United States as rich in 19th-century architecture and equally welcoming.

Grant prided himself on his work being unobtrusive, always delighted when it was imperceptible. His restoration projects show his mini-

alist approach, respectful of the original designer and difficult to detect. After the first IRA bomb at the Palace of Westminster, he was called in to advise on the repair and redecoration of the smaller committee rooms, an initiative which led to a campaign of restoration throughout the palace under the late Robin Cooke MP.

One of his largest commissions was the installation of air-conditioning throughout the Wallace Collection from 1976 to 1982. This involved the reinstatement of original features and redecoration of many of the 20 galleries affected, a seminal project since it was the first time that a curator and consultant had taken the original decorative schemes of even a major Victorian museum into account.

He was consulted by the Royal Albert Hall, and his traditional but vibrant redecoration of the Royal Staircase and Royal Refectory Room was completed last year. Grant was never afraid of using rich patterns whether on the walls or in the carpet, happily commissioning modern copies of traditional Victorian fabrics and papers, believing that even the most insistent pattern retreated into its proper place in the decorative scheme when correctly used. He refurbished two former Rothschild residences, Halton and Ascott in Buckinghamshire.

He worked at the Reform Club, a Grade I listed building for which he always had a great affection, and also redecorated much of its neighbour the RAC with equal success. He was never a "Goth" but nonetheless was employed by the Crown Estate to furnish and decorate all the Quinlan Terry villas in Regent's Park, including one in the Gothic style.

This was the sort of project which he enjoyed, punctilious in every detail, very much what he had done in his own house in Kensington, with the assistance of his life-long friend Paul Taylor. Together they bought Victorian art and decorative features, often from the Portobello Road in the 1950s and 1960s, using them to create a rich and attractive interior. This was always a hospitable house, and guests from all over the world, learnt to love and understand Victorian interior design as so professionally displayed, and returned home as convinced preservationists.

Grant was involved in many Kensington bodies, becoming Vice Chairman of the Kensington Society, and Chairman of the Ladbroke Association at his death. His two worlds were combined in Linley Sambourne House, the house of Lord and Lady Rosse, where the Victorian Society had been founded. When the Greater London Council bought the house in 1980, they turned to the Victorian Society to manage it, and Ian Grant was chairman of the managing committee until 1997. In this capacity he was able to ensure that the restoration of the interior was sensitive and minimal. His influence was also significant at Leighton House, where again he advised the curator, Stephen Jones, in his characteristic way, always generous with practical advice and experienced guidance.

ERINIONE HOBSON

Ian Dawson Grant, architect and interior designer: born London 26 March 1925; died London 27 August 1998.

Lucio Battisti

IN THE country which invented the paparazzo, the obsessively private singer-songwriter Lucio Battisti succeeded in avoiding photographers on all but a handful of occasions since his last public appearance in 1982.

Even before he dropped from sight, his relations with the press had been tense, as was his rapport with record companies and even with other musicians such as Giulio Rapetti, known as Mogol, the man who put lyrics to some of Battisti's best-known hits ("Acqua Azzurra", "Acqua Chiara", "Pensieri e Parole", "I giardini di Marzo"), the latter two of which were No 1 in the Italian

charts for more than 20 weeks). His legendary testiness failed, however, to dent the devotion of his fans, and his place of honour in the pantheon of Italian light music remained unchanged.

From the small town of Poggio Bustone north of Rome, Battisti had a hard struggle to break into the music world. When he did, in the mid-Sixties, it was as a humble guitarist in a backing band, and for a while he remained unknown to the general public. The star of this tongue-tied boy from the provinces began to shine amongst musicians, however, when his compositions sent established bands shooting up the charts.

In 1967, Equipe 84 had a No 1 hit with his song "29 Settembre". In the same year he won his first contract as a singer, and his high, nasal tones soon flooded the airwaves. In a decision which was to change the course of Italian popular music, the Ricordi recording company threw Battisti together with the lyricist Mogol. The combination worked: the couple broke the mould, introducing the rhythms of soul and rock 'n' roll into a stagnant scene, and spearheading a new generation of singer-songwriters.

Others took Battisti's legacy further, injecting the kind of strong revolutionary-left element absent from his more lyrical works, and earning

him a reputation as being on the other, unfashionable, side of the political fence. But the simplicity of the Battisti-Mogol creations, their dwelling on the emotions and anxieties of youth, was considered by many a welcome antidote to the aggressive commitment of their contemporaries.

In 1969 his first album, *Lucio Battisti*, appeared, gathering together a series of hit singles and sealing a love affair with the public which was to continue up to and beyond his death. He went on to sing with Wilson Pickett, and to write for the leading ladies of Italian music: Mina and Patty Pravo. Almost every single he

released between 1969 and 1976 went straight to the top of the charts.

Battisti's fame sat uneasily on him, and arguments with his colleagues were frequent. The Battisti-Mogol team broke away from Ricordi early in the Seventies to set up their own label, Numero Uno. But the collaboration with Mogol came to an end too, breaking down acrimoniously in 1980, since when he has worked with his wife, Grazia Letizia Veronesi, who is blamed by many for his estrangement from the world of commercial music.

With Veronesi, Battisti produced more experimental works - a new recording was almost ready for release at the time of his death - but

these failed to excite the same enthusiasm as his earlier ones. He remained, however, one of Italy's highest-ever musical earners, surpassed only by Domenico Modugno of Volare fame. Used incessantly in film scores, on television, in commercials and reproduced in cover versions, his creations continued to produce royalties in excess of one billion lire (£350,000) each year.

ANNE HANLEY

Lucio Battisti, singer, songwriter, record producer: born Poggio Bustone, Italy 5 March 1943; married Grazia Letizia Veronesi (one son); died Milan 9 September 1998.



Battisti: high, nasal tones



Lamar Crowson

TALK TO any musician who performed with the pianist Lamar Crowson or was his student, and within the first sentence at least one (and, more often than not, all) of the following adjectives will be uttered: "inspirational", "magical", "peerless".

In 1981 Alfred Brendel described Crowson as "one of the finest chamber music pianists of our day". Brendel was reviewing *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and his comments referred to the lamentable (accidental) omission of an entry on Crowson—an oversight now rectified for the forthcoming edition. Reflecting on one of the first times he heard Crowson in partnership with Jacqueline du Pré, Brendel wonders why a virtuoso soloist of his calibre should prefer to concentrate on chamber music. Crowson's own words provide an answer: he occasionally confessed to finding solo work "bare and lonely".

Nevertheless, as a soloist he brought exceptional eloquence to his playing, especially of sonatas by Haydn, Mozart and Clementi, while summoning an equal degree of panache to such Romantic works as Rachmaninoff's Fourth Piano Concerto and an astonishingly wide range of contemporary music. Peter Racine Fricker's *Twelve Studies*, of which Crowson gave the first performance in Cheltenham in 1961, are dedicated to him.

It was probably his capacity to bring out the best in others that made him a consummate chamber musician. As Emmanuel Hurwitz, leader of the Melos Ensemble, put it: "When you walk on to a platform with someone of his artistic integrity, you feel nothing but total confidence". Among his recordings with the Melos, the Mozart and Beethoven Quintets for Piano and Wind, Einhard's Quintet and Septet, Schubert's "Trout" Quintet (why has that not yet been reissued as a CD?) and Janacek's Concertino (which earned the Edison Award), particularly demonstrate the vibrancy of his pianism. His flawless rhythmic drive, always intense and compelling, is equally apparent in his recording of the Fauré Piano Quartet (with the Pro Arte).

The list of artists with whom he appeared is a paean of praise in itself—the Amadeus Quartet, Janet Baker, Dennis Brain, Norbert Brainin, Pierre Fournier, Ralph Kirshbaum, Manoug Parikian, Itzhak Perlman, Ruggiero Rucci and Uto Ughi, to mention just a few. More recently, indeed just a matter of months ago, Crowson accompanied Tasmin Little on her visit to South Africa.

Born in 1926, Crowson received his early education in Portland, Oregon, where he went on to study history, literature and art at Reed College in 1943–44 and 1946–48; the intervening period was spent in the US Navy.

In 1948, at the invitation of Arthur Benjamin, he left the United States to become Benjamin's piano pupil at the Royal College of Music in London (as Benjamin Britten had been in the 1930s; it was from Britten that Crowson said



Crowson (left) with the cellist Alexander Kok, Cape Town, 1968

Photo-Hausmann

he learned the quiet art of page-turning). During the 1950s he was awarded many prestigious prizes, notably the Chappell Gold Medal, the Damrosch Prize and the Harriet Cohen International Medal. In 1952 he was among the finalists in the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. He went on to perform concertos with such illustrious conductors as Barbirolli, Barenboim, Boulez, Boult, Davis, Monteux and Solti.

Having been appointed to the staff of the Royal College of Music in 1957, Crowson made his first visit to Cape Town as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in 1963. After three years as a lecturer at the South African College of Music (University of Cape Town, 1965–69), he returned to the RCM (1969–71); but his connection with South Africa was the one that was to endure.

His decision to settle there in 1972 was met with general bewilderment; there can be no doubt, however, that he enhanced the musical life of the com-

patriot beyond measure, while also retaining his international links. At UCT he was made a professor in 1980 and received an honorary doctorate in 1986.

The warmth of his personality, his nervous energy, intellectual rigour, generosity of spirit, creative imagination, sense of humour, quick wit, immense wisdom and kindness all contributed to Crowson's exceptional gifts as a teacher.

His master classes, not only at the RCM and UCT but also at the Britten-Pears Academy, Dartington, the University of Queensland and elsewhere, were the perfect vehicle for him to communicate his insights and encourage in his students the ability to exchange ideas and articulate their opinions on questions of style and technique, tone production and colour.

The pianist Howard Shelley, one of his pupils, said of Crowson:

As a teacher, he was one of that rare breed who is able to adapt to each student's personality, drawing out the very best. The antithesis of the typical music professor, he

was lively, modern and dynamic in appearance and approach. He was usually dressed in denim and cowboy boots, and his trademark was a distinctive pipe through which he puffed aromatic tobacco as he expounded his fascinating and individual theories on music, the piano and performing. His refined fingers produced a unique luminosity and expressiveness, even in the softest pianissimo.

Among other students of Crowson to have developed professional careers of their own are Clifford Benson, Ian Brown (of the Nash Ensemble), Gweneth Pryn, Jan Latham-Koenig, Niel Immelman and the late Steven De Groot. Crowson was as devoted to his pupils as they were to him. As he wrote in a recent letter to Benson, "Records get deleted; critiques crumble; but good students, like children and grandchildren, perpetuate".

RUTH THACKERAY

John Lamar Crowson, pianist: born Tampa, Florida 27 May 1926; three times married (two sons); died Johannesburg 25 August 1998.

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

FRANKLIN: Ted, musician, scholar and peerless folksinger, died peacefully on 21 September surrounded by his family. Funeral on Tuesday 15 September from the Sacred Heart Church at Eden Grove N7, following 12 o'clock mass, to Islington Cemetery at 1pm. Rest in peace. All his friends past and present will be warmly welcome to celebrate a remarkable and wonderful man and to mourn his passing.

LINCOLN: Dr Rosemary Denton died at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital on 7 September 1998. Funeral service will take place at St Faith's Crematorium on Friday 11 September 1998, at 1.30pm. Donations by request. Flowers by 2pm, or donations for the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine, c/o Gordon Barber Funeral Home, St Williams Way, Thorpe St Andrews, Norwich NR7 0AW. 01603 702460.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards.

GAZETTE BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS are charged at £5.50 a line (VAT extra). Always include a daytime telephone number.

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Thomas Allen, operatic baritone, 54; Mr Michael Bukt (Barry), television food expert and radio executive, 57; Mrs Beryl Cook, painter, 72; Miss Louise Croll, former ambassador to Costa Rica, 63; Mr Brian Donohue MP, 50; Mr Ted Edgar, showjumper, 60; Baroness Emerton, chief officer, Nursing and Social Care, St John Ambulance, 63; Mr John Entwistle, rock guitarist, 54; Mr José Ferrer, dancer, singer, 53; Miss Judy Geeson, actress, 50; Professor Chevalier Herbert Giles, Emeritus Professor of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool University, 77; Mr David Hamilton, disc jockey, 59; Mr Christopher Hogwood, harpsichordist, 57; Major John Makgill Crich ton-Maitland, former Lord-Lieutenant of Renfrewshire, 73; The Very Rev Michael Mayne, former Dean of Westminster, 65; Mr Frederick Moorfoot, former chairman Kodak, 82; Mr Norman Morrice, choreographer, 67; Lord Nolan, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 70; Mr Nevill Ovens, former chief constable, Lincolnshire Police Force, 60; Mr Arnold Palmer, golfer, 69; General Sir Antony Read, former governor of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, 85; Sir Peter Reynolds, former chairman Ranks Hovis McDougall plc, 69; Mr Denis Richards, writer and historian of the Royal Air Force, 88; Dame Betty Ridley, former Third Church Estates Commissioner, 89; Mr Bill Rogers, golfer, 47; Sir Peter

Singer, High Court judge, 54; Dr Brian Smith, chairman, BAA, 70; Sir Robert Smith, former chairman, Alliance and Second Alliance Trust, 71; Sir Rupert Speer, former MP, 88; Mr Robert Wise, film director and producer, 84; Miss Fay Wray, actress, 91.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Quentin Massys, painter, 1466; Pope Julius III, 1487; Thomas Sydenham, physician, 1624; John Turberville Needham, RC priest and scientist, 1713; Niccolo Jommelli, composer, 1714; Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, painter and engraver, 1727; Sir John Soane, architect, 1753; Munro Park, explorer of Africa, 1771; Jacques Boucher de Crèvecœur de Perthes, archaeologist, 1788; François BENOIST, organist and composer, 1794; Philip Gilbert Hamerton, artist and writer, 1834; Sir John Robert Seeley, historian and essayist, 1834; Charles Sanders Peirce, philosopher, 1839; Robert Koldehoefer, archaeologist, 1855; Jeppa Akjaer, poet and novelist, 1866; Vibhaji Ranasinghi, Maharaja of Travancore, 1872; Franz Werfel, novelist and poet, 1890; Arthur Holly Compton, physicist, 1892; Bessie Love (Juanita Horton), actress, 1898; Cyril Vernon Connolly, writer, journalist and critic, 1908; Gwendoline Watford, actress, 1927.

Deaths: Louis IV (d'Outremer), King of France, 954; Dr Edward Pococke, scholar and orientalist, 1691; Dr Thomas Sheridan, scholar and writer, 1782; Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, feminist and writer, 1797; Johan Dominicus Florillo, painter and art historian, 1821; Ugo Foscolo, poet, 1827; Captain William Hobson, first Governor of New Zealand, 1842; George Bentham, botanist, 1844; Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, traveller, politician and poet, 1922; Arthur Reed Ropes ("Adrian Ross"), lyricist and librettist, 1933; Huey Pierce Long, US senator from Louisiana, assassinated 1935; Charles Crutt, founder of Crutt's dog show, 1938; Felix Bloch, physicist, 1943; Baltazar Johannes Vorster, former prime minister and president of South Africa, 1983.

On this day: the English defeated the Scots at the Battle of Pinkie, 1547; the Peace of Nystad was concluded between Sweden and Russia, 1721; the Battle of Lake Erie was fought when Commodore Oliver H. Perry defeated the British flotilla, 1813; Simon Bolivar became the dictator of Peru, 1823; the Duke of York's Theatre, London opened (as the "Traffalgar Square"), 1892; the first London production of the operetta *The Chocolate Soldier* was presented, 1910; the Treaty of St Germain (peace with Austria) was signed, 1919; the first motorway (autobahn) was completed in Germany, 1921; the first London production of the musical show *Sally* was presented, 1921; British forces arrived in France, 1939; in Norway, Lauritz Vid-

kuun Quisling was sentenced to death for treason 1945; Sir Seretse Khama became the first president of the Republic of Botswana, 1966; the people of Gibraltar voted overwhelmingly to stay under British rule, 1967; Guinea-Bissau became independent, 1974.

Today is the Feast Day of St Ambrose Barlow, St Aubert of Avranches, St Finian of Moville, Saint Memendra, Metodora and Nympha, St Nicholas of Tolentino, St Pulcheria, St Savina or Salvi of Albi and St Theodard of Maestricht.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Rebecca Lyons, "Reflections (II): The Image of the Artist: 19th-century persons", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Philippe Barton, "Renaissance Ornament", 2pm. Tate Gallery: Judith Bronkurst, "Sunshine and Shadow: William Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood", 1pm. British Museum: George Hart, "Governors of Ancient Aswan", 11.30am. National Portrait Gallery: Margaret Wolfit, "Elizabeth Garret Anderson", 1.10pm.

LORD SWAYTHLING

A Memorial Service will be held for Lord Swaythling at 5pm on Thursday 17 September 1998 at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Road, London NW8.

TECHNOLOGICAL NOTES

TOM STANDAGE

The Internet is only as good as its users

IS THE Internet a force for good, or evil? On the one hand we have the Government encouraging the nation's schools to get online; on the other hand, the Internet is widely seen as a seedy underworld populated by hackers and pornographers. An educational panacea or hotbed of criminality? The lesson of history is that this is the wrong question to ask.

The truth is that ever since people have invented things other people have found ways to put those things to criminal use. It is a well-known fact that no other section of the population avail themselves more readily and speedily of the latest triumphs of science than the criminal class.

Inspector John Bonfield, a Chicago policeman, told the *Chicago Herald* 1888.

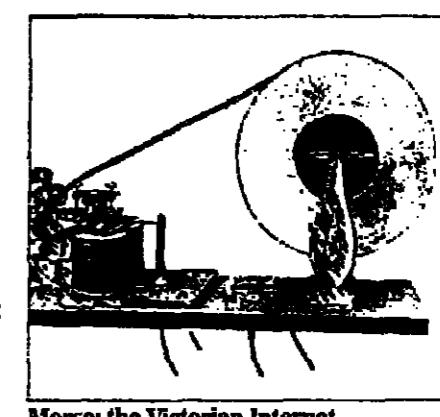
Bonfield was referring not to the Internet, but to its 19th-century ancestor: the electric telegraph, a vast messaging system that spanned the world 150 years ago, linking far-flung countries into a network of constantly updated news, business information and private messages. The telegraph was, in effect, the Victorian Internet.

Today we regard things like hackers, codebreakers and online weddings as uniquely modern phenomena associated with the Internet; but they could all be found on the telegraph network too. Spies and criminals used its wires to send coded messages; others used the network's speed to get advance knowledge of the outcomes of horse races. Illicit romances blossomed between telegraph operators as they tapped away at their Morse keys.

All of which serves to tell us something about the Internet: that the misdeeds perpetrated over its wires and fibre-optic cables should not be blamed on the technology itself, but on its users. The fact that exactly the same sorts of misdeeds were going on in the last century shows that unchanging human nature, rather than fast-moving technology, is the real culprit.

Yet the Internet also has its boosters, who believe that it will usher in a new era of international understanding. In a speech in November 1997, Nicholas Negroponte, head of the MIT Media Laboratory, declared that the Internet would break down national borders and lead to world peace. In the future, he claimed, children "are not going to know what nationalism is."

Exactly the same wild claims were



Morse: the Victorian Internet

made about the telegraph, following the completion of the first transatlantic cable in 1858. In 1884, by which time the world had been completely trussed up with telegraph cables, Sir John Pender, chairman of the company that is known today as Cable & Wireless, suggested that telegraphy had "prevented diplomatic ruptures and consequent war and been instrumental in promoting peace and happiness. The cable nipped the evil of misunderstanding leading to war in the bud." The events of the next decades, of course, proved him wrong.

Given a new invention, there will always be some people who see only its potential to improve the world, while others see new opportunities to get up to no good. The mistake that was made in the last century, and is being made again today, is to think that technology can change human nature; that inventions alone can make us better or worse people.

After the arrest of 200 suspected members of an Internet-based pornography ring earlier this month, one civil liberties lawyer, James X. Dempsey, summed things up perfectly. "The Internet only facilitates crime the way the automobile facilitates crime," he told the *Washington Post*. "Like any tool, it has pluses and minuses." It was true of 19th-century technology, and it is just as true today.

*Tom Standage is the author of *The Victorian Internet: the remarkable story of the telegraph and the 19th-century's online pioneers* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.99)*

Taste of genius on the trolley trail

THE INDEPENDENT ARCHIVE

10 SEPTEMBER 1988

Jeremy Round challenged Marco Pierre White, the rising star of the London chefs, to invent a meal for two for the amateur cook for under £25

EVEN DETRACTORS occasionally hint that Marco Pierre White may well be a genius. Less than a year after opening Harvey's – his restaurant in Wandsworth, south London – had been awarded its first Michelin star. At 26, after training with a chef who's who of top names including Albert Roux and Pierre Koffmann, he has redrawn the gastronomic map of London.

He is half Italian. You couldn't tell from his accent, but there is a certain style – flowing ringlets, high cheekbones and paler, salty humour – like a quattrofoglio bike-boy. I was to take him to the big Sainsbury near his Cromwell Road flat, in London, to see how he might tackle our cookery competition. By the time we hit the supermarket he was at full throttle.

His brief was a meal for two for the amateur cook to prepare in two hours for less than £25.

He headed straight for the poultry – "no point in looking at the vegetables until we know what we're having for the main course". It looked to him, from the too-red beef and tightly cling-filmed chickens, as if presentation was more important than flavour. He spent some time feeling a duck, but pronounced it fatty and settled on a pack of French duck breasts – "A big one for the husband, and a small one for the wife. Does that sound sexist?"

On the fish counter: "It looks like the trolley hit a fish graveyard." He railed on about the sunken eyes and dull scales. Only some coral-pink fillets of raw trout came up to scratch. Back to the vegetables and fruit. Here he was impressed by a range, also the quality of a few

items, especially some asparagus and black Turkish figs, but worried that hardly anything smelt of much. "People think they need to squeeze fruit to see if it's ripe. The smell is a much better indicator."

Shorty was happy that we had everything. He started telling strange women that the fish slab would knock the smile off their faces, "darling", and, by the time he was doing Quasimodo impressions down the aisle, over moderate heat until the mixture has reduced to a "moist, jamb-like consistency" of about 1lb, slightly then, whisking energetically all the time, gradually add the butter until you have a creamy sauce.

This part of the process should take around 3 minutes, towards the end of which you should whisk faster and slightly raise the heat. Season, add lemon juice and take off the heat.

Just before serving, sauté vegetables in very little water and a knob of butter. Arrange hot quenelles on warm plates, spoon a dessert spoon or so of warm sauce over each and scatter with vegetable strips.

(The main course was Duck Breast with Red Wine Sauce and Creamed Parsley, with Strawberry Gratin to follow.)

CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE
analectic, adj. or n.
Of Latin and Greek origins, the word – meaning restorative – turns out not to be in contemporary usage after all, but petered out in the mid-19th century, when used to urge the curative properties of chocolate and sage. Anden was surely right to put his trust in the harder stuff.

The new high priest of fashion

Confess – you're praying for a fashion bible to show you the way. Search no more. With the Vatican's new range of designer chic, you need never be a sacrificial victim on the altar of style. By Annalisa Barbieri

For many years I had wanted an excuse to ring the Pope. And suddenly, here it was. Next week, it was announced. His Holiness will bring out a range of sunglasses, T-shirts and what were called, with a delicious lack of detail, leather items.

There were many things I had planned to say to him: "How can you find time to design outfits when you have all that corruption in the Church to deal with? How can you find time to design when you should be out on your balcony, Your Holiness, telling bad Catholic women that they shouldn't be using contraceptives?"

To be fair to John Paul II – but then why should I be? If it were up to him, I'd be on my 12th child by now. But, to try to be fair – he isn't the first to mix religion and fashion, and the Roman Catholic Church has been down this road before. Five years ago, their American branch allowed the Pope's name to be used on T-shirts, sunglasses and baseball caps, to raise money so that 150,000 young Catholics could go on a pilgrimage with the Pope to Colorado. They stopped short at "Pope on a Rope" soap, however.

Designers such as John Richmond and Dolce & Gabbana – all of them Roman Catholics – have for years used religious insignia on their garments in a most irreverent way. It's easy to see why Religion, especially that creaky old ship Catholicism, is an easy target for those wanting to rebel.

When I was at convent school, we were taught that so much as putting the rosary over your head and wearing it as a necklace was a mortal sin. Pinning the bleeding heart of the Sacred Heart on your bodice as a fashion statement, let alone decorating gauze dresses with the Blessed Virgin Mary (both of which Dolce & Gabbana did last season) would have seen you on a diet of "Glory Be" for months. So if you want a quick and violent reaction, you can get it by sticking two fingers up at the Church.

"I was brought up in Manchester as a Catholic schoolboy and that guilt-ridden identity never really leaves you," explains John Richmond. "That anger manifested itself, especially in my early collections, with all those slashes and zips I did. But I'm calmer now; I've used the guilt and exercised it from my mind to material."

In 1990, the Vatican threatened to ban Madonna's *Blond Ambition* tour from Rome, saying that it was "one of the most satanic shows in the history of humanity". On stage, Madonna's props included blazing

crucifixes, tabernacles and a bed covered in cardinal scarlet linen to frolic on. She also got friendly with a dancer dressed as a priest.

The Vatican threatened to excommunicate her from the Catholic faith, the harshest punishment it can impose. One poor misguided bishop even said: "The crosses used by Madonna are not only obscene, but also surprising. It was thought she had been brought up in the spirit of religious faith." Hm. Precisely why she was using them.

But don't listen to me, because (really) Cathe-chic is the next big thing. The United States has already caught the first wave. Over there in "bible factory outlet" chain stores, you can buy items such as Latham's Testaments: each sweet is marked with a cross and wrapped in paper printed with an extract from the Bible. But their biggest seller is their "What Would Jesus Do?" range. These are bracelets and key fobs printed with WWJD and manufactured by a company called Fresco in Michigan (where Madonna is from – can't you see why she flipped?). The company (which claims that it doesn't have to market the product – "God sells it") have a terrific marketing angle. If you're wearing a bracelet with the WWJD initials and someone asks you what it means, you're meant to give it to them. So you have to replace it, and on and on it goes.

And the point of them? Well, when you're about to commit adultery or blow someone's brains out, you catch sight of your key fob or bracelet and think "what would Jesus do?", and then you do just that. Never mind that a great many paranoid types believe that God is telling them to kill anyway. World peace is sure to follow.

So Il Papa and his new range of accessories. I called the Vatican press office who confirmed its appearance next week, but would give no more details. They know the importance of designer secrecy, plus, I think, it was time for their siesta (they work only until 3pm).

Naturally, the Pope will not be designing the stuff himself; he will just license his name to raise money for Project 2000, which is a scheme that sends young Catholics on pilgrimages. The sunglasses (which will cost about £22 a pair) will be signed "Joannes Paulus PP II" in his own hand, and the words "Exist for Someone" will be printed on the frames.

I can guess at the other designs in the range: possibly trousers with padded knees, for praying and taking kneeing penance on dried corn kernels; T-shirts that light up with slogans to

show if you've indulged in (unlawful) sex the night before.

What do people in the industry think of the Pope's attempt to break into fashion? "Why not?" says Richmond. "He's keeping up with the times; he should modernise the Church."

"I like the affirming message that will be on the frame," says Andrew M Brown, associate editor of the *Catholic Herald*.

"It's done for a good cause, then I'm not against it," says Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, who has designed robes for the Pope (and *Charlie's Angels*). "Times are changing; if it's a good design and well conceived, then it's definitely good. But sometimes I go to Lourdes, or some other place of pilgrimage, and the designs are not so good."

Brown agrees. "The Catholic Church does seem to attract incredibly tacky merchandise, and Catholics seem to have a great tolerance, even fondness, for it."

Hopefully, this range won't be tacky. Two years ago, the Pope personally chose de Castelbajac to design his robes, and those of his bishops and priests, for the Festival of Youth in Paris, which took place last year.

De Castelbajac, too, has always had a religious theme to his clothes (most of them are based on the T-shirt or cross shape) but his use of such designs is not a rebellion against his faith. "Oh no," he cries. "I have always had a religious influence in my designs."

"I went to Catholic boarding school, and those images stay with you – they are so powerful. But I don't do it as a trend. I am very much at peace spiritually, and I think that it is right for me to use these influences in fashion."

De Castelbajac said that the Pope (who gave him *carte blanche* with the designs) was very nice to him when they met. "He called me 'young man,'" he sniggers. "But I am 49!" What a charmer!

After speaking to de Castelbajac, however, I think I may have to be more supportive of the Church, as the alternatives are even more horrifying.

"After I met the Pope," explains de Castelbajac, "I read a report that said the most famous symbol in the whole world, the one most recognised, was the 'M' of McDonald's. The cross was only number four (after Marlboro and Coca-Cola). I think it would be good if the cross went back to being number one again."

Oh dear. There's still time for that phone call. "Bless me, father, for I have sinned..."



Pope John Paul II is the spiritual leader of millions, but could they be forgiven for not following his fashion sense? Rex Features

'We don't want to upset the NRA'

Continued from page 1
an overpass and cracking a car windscreen below – an offence that in other circumstances might have landed him behind bars but in Springfield resulted in little more than a caution. His mother reacted to the incident by making Kip learn the Lord's Prayer and do household chores to earn his pocket money, but did not think to rid the house of firearms.

Kip surfing the family computer and taught himself how to make quite sophisticated bombs – something he boasted about both in a speech in class and in online messages on the Internet. His obsession disconcerted a handful of other parents enough to have him banned from their houses. In one case, he got his own back by squirting the letters K-I-L-L in whipped cream on the offending family's driveway.

His parents were both education specialists (his father had recently retired as a Spanish teacher from Thurston High), but they found themselves utterly unable to control their son – a fact that is not talked about much in Springfield, out of respect for their deaths. For a while they took him to a psychologist in Eugene, the liberal university town a few miles to the west.

The psychologist's only suggestion was to put Kip on Prozac. The



Ribbons of Promise in Springfield – but no discussion PA

sessions ended after a few months.

How could all this have gone unnoticed? According to Larry Bentz, there was nothing unusual about an adolescent talking about weapons and violence in class, so that in itself was not a cause for particular alarm. At one point Kip stopped submitting homework, but he started again immediately after the school had written to his parents. "This was a boy who responded to criticism. We could not tell he was on the verge of such a big crisis," Bentz adds.

There was nothing unusual, either, about Kip's access to firearms in a community like Springfield. While a few hard questions have been asked recently about where the system went wrong –

whether the police should have been obliged to detain the boy indefinitely after he was caught at school, for example – the key issue of restricting access to firearms has gone entirely by the board.

The Thurston shootings have spawned a local anti-violence movement called the Ribbon of Promise campaign, which has gone out of its way not to talk about gun control. "It's too political," says the campaign's spokeswoman, Jodi Henry. "We don't want to upset the NRA."

For the same reason, Ribbon of Promise is also failing to address the other key issue – the shrinking infrastructure of social services, and school counselling in particular.

Education spending is diminish-

POETIC LICENCE

THE NEW BRITSPEAK BY MARTIN NEWELL
ILLUSTRATION: SHANE McGOWAN

This decade has given us new words such as *himbo* and *Bobbitt*, and acronyms such as *Nimby* and *Stibad* (single income, no boyfriend and absolutely desperate). A *Glossary for the Nineties*, which explains new Britspeak, is published this month

The pinnacle of cynical
For disco, work and media
Britspeak as she's broken
But nastier and greedier
Welded to the language
As quick as gum to pavement
Newly minted coinage
Of soundbite-as-enslavement

Literary Lego
For the witness in denial
To pigeonhole contemporaries
By status and by style
Pizza-parlour platitudes
Certified as "funny"
Tragic little terms of use
For humans, jobs and money



Commandeered from comics
For sofa spuds and slackers
Overused by overdogs
And radio station hackers
Stolen in election spins
By earnest guys in braces
For happy-clappy candidates
With polytechnic faces

Prêt-à-porter phrases
For the person in a hurry
Guffed out by an ad-man
After beer and balti curry
Sprinkled on the word hoard
Like chocolate vermicelli
Bobbitt! Ha, ha, geddit? Laugh?
I nearly smashed the telly

07/10/98

FILM

Killing time killing Nazis

THE BIG PICTURE



RYAN GILBEY

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)
DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG
170 MINS
STARRING TOM HANKS
AND TOM SIZEMORE

Saving Private Ryan tells the story of an eight-man mission to locate and rescue a single soldier out of the thousands scattered behind enemy lines in the Second World War, and it has the notable distinction of featuring a career-best performance from the actor Tom Hanks, though it is unlikely that the film will be defined by this in the minds of those who see it. What will be branded on the memory are a pair of visceral, devastating 25-minute battle sequences by which the movie is bookended. Or rather, almost bookended.

What actually open and close the film are modern-day scenes—an elderly war veteran trooping to a cemetery with two successive generations of family in tow, his children pious, his grandchildren respectfully furrowing their brows. It's less a case of the film introducing itself, than Spielberg announcing his ideal audience profile.

This kind of contextualisation is nothing more than an inexperienced screenwriter's way of justifying the story which is about to be told. The device didn't work when Ken Loach employed it in *Land and Freedom*, though he had the defence that the Spanish Civil War still retained a degree of obscurity. You may feel less secure placing yourself in the hands of a film-maker who structures his movie to accommodate those members of the audience who are a bit fuzzy about that Second World War business. In its opening and closing minutes, *Saving Private Ryan* offers a reminder that the freedom you take for granted today was secured by conflicts resolved half a century ago. Funny that we couldn't be trusted to detect these resonances unassisted. Funny that the tale couldn't simply be told.

Saving Private Ryan is a film of interesting if contrived contrasts. One of the most pointed examples may be purely coincidental. As the Allied troops disembark on Omaha



Effortless power: some of Tom Hanks's (right) best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness

beach, the camera drifts underwater where a single bullet passes through the bodies of two soldiers. You can't shake the echo of an identical scene in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*: that film was set in the Second World War as well, but back then the violence was fun: the stray bullet provoked laughs, not gasps. It's a telling lesson in the choreography of context—the same director, the same act of violence even, orchestrated to achieve entirely different results. Not for the first time, you may have a sense of Spielberg wrestling with his own inflexible image.

For most of the film, though, he is wrestling with an inflexible screenplay. The combat footage which Spielberg shoots is an attempt to create as close to a subjective, unstructured viewpoint as is humanly possible when you're hugging cameras around in the mud and then pruning the results down to the

last millisecond in the comfort of your editing suite. What the screenwriter Robert Rodat has created is a piece of work which achieves the opposite effect. It is a model of organisation. Which would be just dandy if the film didn't begin by expressing a desire to articulate the chaos of war. Sure, bullets fly out of thin air, and you're as likely to be killed by a bomb that you are attempting to plant as by a wily German sniper. But nothing else about life during wartime is so arbitrary.

Did you know, for example, that squads were comprised of one member from each of the various personality groups? The team which Captain John Miller (Hanks) is left with after the massacre at Omaha Beach is a good example. There is the gruff Ernest Borgnine bulldog (Tom Sizemore). The cheeky Brooklyn wide-boy (Edward Burns). The intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone respects (Giovanni Ribisi)

and the intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone ridicules because he hasn't learned to kill yet (Jeremy Davies). But don't worry. He will. Rodat doesn't really go in for characterisation. In its place, everyone gets a story to tell, most of the stories expressing unexpected sensitivity, philosophical depth and sturdy heterosexuality, often all at the same time. It may be the single brilliant stroke of the script to deny that privilege to Miller. As the soldiers kill time, waiting for Nazi tanks to roll over the bridge which they have crammed with explosives, Miller mentions something which brings him happiness: the thought of his wife, pruning the garden. "Tell me about your wife and those rose bushes," someone asks. "No," Miller says quietly but firmly. "That one I save just for me."

Hanks may be one of the only actors who could carry off a role as predictably righteous as Captain Miller and still suggest that there are parts of him no one will ever get to see. It helps that his face is starting to age and crease—his skin looks as rumpled and tattered as his uniform. And yet he can still draw on that boyish, flashing grin when he needs to. Some of his best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness—when he witnesses the grisly remains of the four Ryan brothers, when he witnesses two soldiers gunning down a German prisoner, you can't be sure exactly where his evident sympathies are directed.

The effortless power of Hanks's work provides another welcome contrast, underlining the clumsiness of Spielberg's manipulative techniques, which grow steadily less sophisticated with each film he makes. The clash between the battle sequences in *Saving Private Ryan* and the material in between is jarringly unhappy, and it comes very suddenly with a single camera movement and a murmur of John

Williams' mournful score. After the indiscriminate carnage on Omaha Beach, the camera stops juddering and starts sweeping gracefully across the bodies lapped by the rusty-red waves, finally settling on the kitbag of a dead soldier—Private Ryan. From there, the film goes on to reveal that only one of the four Ryan brothers remains alive, and Captain Miller and his squad are dispatched to find him as bugles start tooting on the soundtrack, and you realise that the opening burst of romantic daring was only there to hull you into a false sense of insecurity.

It isn't the explicit violence of the opening section which is shocking—anyone who braved the Vietnam scenes of the Hughes Brothers' *Dead Presidents* is unlikely to experience peristalsis at the sight of a heap of unspooled intestines. Rather, the relentless motion of the camera, and Spielberg's disregard for visual and aural coherence, are

more unsettling than any of the atrocities that he stages.

There are juxtapositions here which are the work of a great craftsman—between the dispassionate typists coldly bashing out tragic telegrams, and the sensitive voiceover reading their contents; between the gruff, bulky soldiers slouching around a gramophone, and the fragility of the Edith Piaf record which is being played on it; between the tragedy of your friends losing their legs and the urgency with which you must remove their ammunition and leave them for dead. But a director who switches so cleanly between two disparate styles can easily appear disloyal to both. It may be that the film's tentative, non-committal closing image—a gossamer-thin American flag rendered grey and bloodless by the sun blazing through its fabric—says more about Spielberg than anything in the preceding three hours.

ALSO SHOWING

LA VIE DE JESUS (NC) BRUNO DUMONT ■ **COUSIN BETTE (15)** DES MCANUFF
■ **BABYMOTHER (15)** JULIAN HENRIQUES



A film on heat: The real star of 'Babymother' is the costume designer

which approaches the essence of compassionate film-making.

The picture neatly underlines the boredom of Freddy and his pals with grim humour. What do you do when you're growing up in Nowheresville? You play in the marching band. You squat around on your piddly motorcycle. You sit in parked cars and sing. Dumont has captured this world with painful accuracy. The combination of impulsive camerawork and a cast of beautifully unselfconscious non-

professionals gives the picture a raw tenderness that is quite breathtaking. And the attention to detail can really sting—Marie's delicate bird-shaped earrings, or the spattered faces of boys who have spent their afternoons spray-painting cars. But then maybe that's just because I'm from Essex, where you really aren't anyone at all until you get your first signet ring and speeding fine.

There isn't any substance to the comedy *Cousin Bette*, set in 19th century France and adapted from

the novel by Balzac, though as a frothy confection it can't be faulted. Jessica Lange plays the title character, a spinster who slips into the role of benefactor to a feral young sculptor (Aden Young). But in pursuing both validation and love from the boy, Bette inadvertently begins a chain of jealousy and betrayal that implicates everyone she knows, from her late cousin's vain husband (a very funny, very poignant Hugh Laurie) to a rapacious actress (Elizabeth Shue).

It may be disappointing that the film doesn't exploit more than just the usual trappings of the costume drama, but then there is still a lot to be said for heaving bosoms, ostentatious embroidery and the sight of British character actors twiddling stringy moustaches and being crisply bitchy to one another. Although the staging can be flat, the director, Des McAnuff, keeps the picture rattling along with sufficient pace and flair to evoke favourable comparisons with Richard Lester. It is the presence of Jessica Lange, though, which gives *Cousin Bette* its alluring glimmer. With her deep, molasses eyes and purring voice, she is perfect as the scheming spider who gets stuck in her own web. Some trick to make malvolence this seductive.

The British reggae musical *Babymother* is vibrant and delightful, and you wouldn't expect to find those words associated with something set in Harlesden. A "babymother" is a parent who is still practically a child herself; the film's heroine (Angela Lauren Smith) is just such a woman, and a would-be reggae star to boot—if only she could find a way to negotiate child-care and the interference of a calculating boyfriend. Despite its gritty tone, the picture buzzes with vitality and colour; often literally. It sometimes appears that the film stock has been splashed with Day-Glo paint. Indeed, the movie's real star is the costume designer Annie Curtis Jones, who loads up the cast with electric blue wigs, feather boas, plastic separates and gold chains as thick as arms. Crucially, the robust, sexy songs can make you giggle. This film is on heat.

All films on release from tomorrow

VIDEO WATCH

MIKE HIGGINS

Chasing Amy (tbc), available to rent now

The concluding instalment of Kevin Smith's loose New Jersey trilogy is an honourable attempt to scale the profane heights that Clerks reached and its successor, Mall Rats, so conspicuously failed to. Once again, Smith focuses on a trio of intelligent, sharp but cynically parochial twenty-somethings who refer to the universe beyond their suburban lives only when they need to give their jokes a bit of worldly breadth.

Plot is only useful in so much as it presents his characters a new topic for ironic deconstruction. So it is when Alyssa (Joey Lauren Adams), a bisexual comic book author, falls for fellow writer Holden (Ben Affleck), to the chagrin of his partner and best friend, Banksy (Jason Lee). In terms of bringing any depth to the characters, though, Smith's handling of Holden's tempestuous affair with Alyssa and Banksy's neanderthal response to it is one-dimensional. Smith seems to think male emotional immaturity is both hilarious (which it is) and an irreversible state of affairs (which it isn't), and uses Alyssa to prove his comic book thesis.

Amistad (15), available to rent from tomorrow

In case the blood-spattered first reel of *Saving Private Ryan* seems out of character for Steven Spielberg, here's an earlier film of his with a similarly gruesome opening sequence, in which 44 enslaved

Africans aboard the eponymous ship slip their chains and kill almost all their captors.

While abolitionists Theodore Joseph (Morgan Freeman) and Louis Taplin (Stellan Skarsgård) team up with huckster property lawyer (Matthew McConaughey) to secure the Africans' freedom, Spielberg shuffles the narrative to the tale of their enslavement and transport across the Atlantic, as recounted by Cinqué (Djimon Hounsou).

Spielberg is also unhappy with the ugly nature of the dispute on which the slaves' freedom rests—are they the property of the Queen of Spain, the surviving crew of La Amistad or the naval officers who "salvaged" them? The equivalent ethical ambiguity in *Schindler's List* had a face, Liam Neeson's. Here, it's the less attractive facade of the US political system and its expediency.

Desperate Measures (18), available to rent from Monday

Imagine Children's Hospital meets *The Silence of the Lambs* with a first-rate cast. Andy Garcia is a San Francisco police officer who discovers that homicidal sociopath, Michael Keaton, is the only person able to provide the bone marrow his dying son needs. When Keaton inevitably escapes in the hospital, Garcia has to ensure that Keaton isn't killed in the pursuit, rendering the bone marrow useless. To their eternal shame, Garcia and Brian Cox, as his boss, play this ludicrous mess straight.

Riding into the sunrise

Kurosawa created the popular image of what a Japanese film should look like, yet his best-known works were nipponifications of the Hollywood Western. By Gilbert Adair

AKIRA KUROSAWA, who died last Sunday, was, at least insofar as his reputation in the West is concerned, the most eminent of all Japanese filmmakers. He was arguably, indeed, the most famous of all Japanese artists.

His two most renowned titles, *Rashomon* and *The Seven Samurai*, form part of the world's collective heritage of filmic masterpieces and his demise was covered by Britain's newspapers not only on their obituary pages, as one would expect, but, exceptionally for a non-English-language filmmaker, as an item of genuine news, an event of import and interest to more than just the closest little community of film students. As ever though, the British press was outclassed by the cinéphile French. Last Monday's edition of the Parisian daily *Libération* devoted no fewer than five pages to his career, garnished with tributes, no less gushing for being brief, from such admirers as Spielberg and even Jacques Chirac. As for Tony Blair, ah well, if it had been one of the Spice Girls...

If you asked one of those film students, whether a scholar, a historian or just a fanatical buff, to name the finest Japanese director the answer would be unlikely to be Kurosawa. At least two other candidates would take precedence: Kenji Mizoguchi and Yasujiro Ozu. For many cinephiles, Kurosawa's work fatally lacks latency. It harbours no shadow-zones of mystery requiring the intervention of some expert interpreter (the movies that buffs love best are those that have to be deciphered and, perhaps above all, belong too much to the public domain). Put bluntly, he has come to be regarded in informed circles as something of a cliché, a director whose worldwide fame and prestige, however merited, have had the tragic consequence of obscuring the immensely rich and multifarious archipelago that is Japanese cinema.

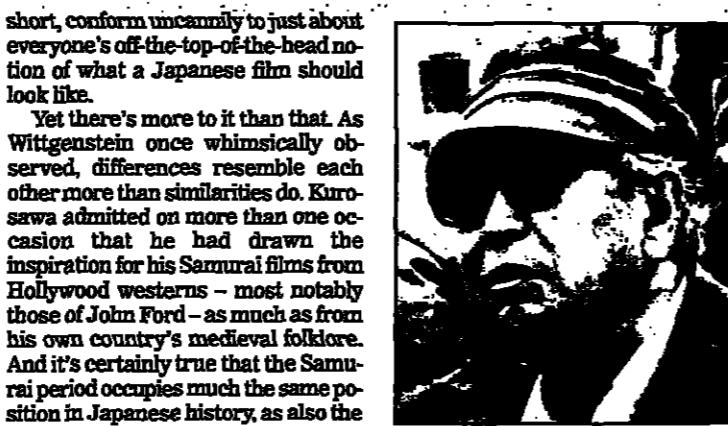
In the arts, and particularly in the cinema, there's nothing unusual about so radical a disavowal of general and specialised taste, but Kurosawa's case is unique. For what it comes down to is that ordinary filmgoers consider him (to the extent that they know his work at all) the most quintessentially "Japanese" of Japanese directors, whereas, for a majority of specialists, he would probably be considered one of the least. Even stranger is the fact that, in a sense, he was both at once.

Take those of his works with which spectators in the West are most familiar, the sequence of Samurai romances: *The Seven Samurai*, most memorably, but also *The Hidden Fortress*, *Scorpio*, *Yojimbo* and the two sumptuous sagas of his last years, *Kagemusha* and *Ran*. Epic of sweep, picaresque of narrative, imbued with the ostentatiously grandioses values of feudal Japan – courage, self-sacrifice, a stoic submission in the face of death – and stuffed with characters (peasants, warriors, geishas), customs, costumes, exteriors and interiors which could hardly be more alien to contemporary Western experience, they are, in a word, exotic.

Paradoxically, though, it's precisely that exoticism which has made them accessible, more accessible than Mizoguchi's proto-feminist melodramas and Ozu's sublime, static comedy-dramas of domestic minutiae. Or, rather, not so paradoxically, for the exotic is just what we Westerners find most reassuring when confronted by artworks produced by another, bafflingly different society. Kurosawa's films, in



The cultural mirror effect: 'The Seven Samurai' remade as 'The Magnificent Seven' (above). Below, Kurosawa himself



short, conform uncannily to just about everyone's off-the-top-of-the-head notion of what a Japanese film should look like.

Yet there's more to it than that. As Wittgenstein once whimsically observed, differences resemble each other more than similarities do. Kurosawa admitted on more than one occasion that he had drawn the inspiration for his Samurai films from Hollywood westerns – most notably those of John Ford – as much as from his own country's medieval folklore. And it's certainly true that the Samurai period occupies much the same position in Japanese history, as also the same myth-generating function in Japanese culture, as the 19th-century settlement of the Western states in American history and culture. What's remarkable in Kurosawa's case, however, is that the traffic travelled in both directions. *The Seven Samurai*, a film partially modelled on the example of the Hollywood western, was of course subsequently remade as a Hollywood western, John Sturges's *The Magnificent Seven*. (So, in fact, was *Rashomon*, by Martin Ritt as *The Outrage*, though the less said about that the better.)

Nor is that by any means the end

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DOUBLE BILL

VENTURA PONS, DIRECTOR OF 'CARESSES', ON HIS IDEAL CINEMATIC PAIRING
ROCCO E I SUOI FRATELLI (ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS) DIR. LUCHINO VISCONTI (1960) DECONSTRUCTING HARRY DIR. WOODY ALLEN (1997)



'Deconstructing Harry' and 'Rocco e i suoi fratelli' (Ronald Grant)



constructed. And its progressive ideology is quite clear. In this film we meet a mature Visconti, the great director, who uses his aristocratic background, his great sense for drama (and melodrama), his taste for music, paintings, culture – to serve a story with a real social meaning.

The Allen film is the reverse, but very interesting too. He makes a continuous entertainment (such a word for the Americans) of something so frightening as the loneliness and contradictions of modern man in big cities.

Deconstructing Harry is a highly intelligent film. Allen uses a great structure to amuse us with his neurosis, going continuously further and back in the story, breaking the traditional narrative rules. I have always liked people who break rules. And how great it is to follow the way he deconstructs with great virtuosity his (our) relations, the way he (we) behave, his (our) need of affection, communication, love and so on.

INTERVIEW BY
JENNIFER RODGER

THESE TWO films, both of which I admire a lot, show two contrasting views regarding life. And they couldn't be more different. *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, the Visconti masterpiece, is a film with a strong political and social compromise, offering a powerful glimpse of a family group that emigrates from its land and is facing an unknown society.

Deconstructing Harry is much more about the individual in a place he has known for ever (but is so unknown, at the same time). Allen is so great with the portrait of the urban man, along with his problems and relating with others. Nobody has been able to explain it as he does – and every time in a more assured style, by the way.

Both films are masterpieces in their genre and they reflect ideas and face reality that belongs to different worlds, so that's why it should be great fun to see them together. And also very interesting, as one is a drama and the other one a comedy. I like both genres, and it would be fine to look to them as drama and comedy are

both sides of the coin of life. Visconti has been one of the most important European filmmakers. Just as Allen is in America, I believe that nowadays in Europe we are the sons of both cultures, as we have grown up in the know-

ledge of both cinemas. The Americans most probably don't have this double fascination with cinematic and social references, but I am not sure.

Allen explains a strong realistic scenario (and also a little bit romantic, in a way), the

problems of a working-class family; a mother with her four sons, arriving in Milan from Calabria, the poor southern Italy. It explores the different ways in which the brothers fight and the ways in which they integrate within the grow-

ing neo-capitalistic society of the Italian Fifties. The film has a brilliant style: the way Visconti introduces those different chapters of each son is so well constructed. Each son is given his own narrative. The dramatic game is powerfully

What a swell location to sell films in

European arthouse meets Hollywood blockbuster at the Venice Film Festival.
By Geoffrey Macnab

THE VENICE Film Festival is the oldest and most elegant of the three major European film bazaars. Founded in the Mussolini era, it has none of the seaside town tackiness of Cannes in May, and is nowhere near as cold and forbidding as Berlin in February. Everything about the Venice Lido suggests luxury and fading grandeur. The tone is set by the two main festival hotels, the Hotel Des Bains, where Thomas Mann wrote *Death in Venice*, and the Excelsior, where a round of Bellinis (the drink of choice for well-heeled festival-goers) costs about as much as the budget for a small European film.

Kris Kristofferson, who also appears in *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*. Among Sobieski's forthcoming projects is the new Stanley Kubrick effort, *Eyes Wide Shut*. Kubrick has sworn her to secrecy about the yet-to-be-completed film, but she offers an intriguing thumbnail sketch of the reclusive director: "He's not this weird guy. He dresses in the same clothes every day, which is fine because he doesn't smell bad – he probably has duplicates."

Kris Kristofferson, who also appears in *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, wouldn't be drawn on the travails of a fellow Rhodes Scholar: "I intuited, he didn't," was all he had to say about Clinton.

Amazingly, some journalists boozed during the press screening of the one British film in competition this year, *Anand Tucker's Hilarity And Jackie*. This hugely moving account of the relationship between the cellist Jacqueline du Pre

(Emily Watson) and her sister Hilary (Rachel Griffiths) shatters for ever the old clichés about British cinema being emotionally repressed.

Yves Angelo's austere, beautifully shot *Voleur de Vie* was led by Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*.



Hilary and Jackie*

In the *Private Ryan* press conference, Tom Hanks paid light-hearted tribute to Spielberg, "the great artist and industrialist". Spielberg in turn paid homage to European cinema, talking about Fellini, whom he met when he came to Italy as a 23-year-old with his film *Duel*, and Antonioni. His next film, which has already been cast, will be *Memoirs of a Geisha*, an adaptation of Arthur Golden's novel.

It was striking to compare the rapturous reception given Spielberg, Hanks and co with the lack of interest shown in the Polish *metz*, Andrzej Wajda, who had appeared on stage a few minutes before. Ditto Alida Kurosova, who had the misfortune to pass away on the day Jim Carrey was in town.

Whatever distractions the Hollywood publicity bandwagon provided, it was still possible to watch up to eight new films a day. There were some pleasant surprises. Susanna Styron's *Shadrack*, a nostalgic, depression-era tale adapted from one of William Styron's stories, boasts a funny and warm-hearted performance from the usually irascible Harvey Keitel. John Dahl's *Rounders*, a low-key but cleverly scripted drama about poker, also hit the mark. Matt Damon, the film's lead, disconcerted interviewers by introducing them to his mother. Another young star with a parent in tow was the precocious 15-year-old Leilee Sobieski, who appears in James

relationship between two sisters (Emmanuelle Beart and Sandrine Bonnaire) while Claude Lelouch's *Hasards ou Coïncidences* dealt with the grief and loneliness of a beautiful young dancer who loses her child. With so many films striking such an introspective, mournful note, Tom Tykwer's wildly energetic *Run Lola Run*, in which a young, shock-haired punk races through the Berlin streets for a rendezvous she dare not miss, provided a welcome rush of adrenaline. Eric Rohmer's *An Autumn's Tale*, a perfectly constructed comedy with just a hint of melancholy about it, was another antidote to the gloom.

The festival doesn't finish until Sunday. With Pat O'Connor's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (which offers the intriguing pairing of Kathy Burke and Meryl Streep), Emir Kusturica's *White Cat, Black Cat* and Warren Beatty's *Bulworth* still to be screened, it is too early to say where the major prizes will go. Regardless of who wins the Golden Lion, though, it is still safe to assume that Hollywood will benefit the most from the fortnight on the Lido. For the Europeans, Venice may be about celebrating cinema as art, but, for the studios, the festival is one big publicity junket: a gilt-edged opportunity to sell their movies in one of the most scenic locations imaginable.

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FAST TRACK

GRADUATING TO THE WORLD OF WORK

Night classes offer real academic work – and silly ways to spend the evening. By Jenny Madden



Sigining up for 'Clown Skills' classes will teach you to 'become aware of your own stupidity', just like a lot of the psycho-babble classes on offer

Classes for the wounded and self-indulgent fools

The new academic year is here again, but wannabe university students aren't the only ones rushing to get places. Further education colleges all over London are currently in the midst of the hectic night-class enrolment period, which will last until term begins on 21 September.

Night classes provide a valuable service. They plug the gap between what you've forgotten or were never taught at school, and what you now need to know in the adult world. With many of the vocational courses already fully enrolled, the popularity of the night class is in no doubt. Whether you need to refresh your rusty O-Level French or learn a new computer package for work, or if maturity has brought a curiosity about a subject you never paid attention to at school, a night class is a way to improve and extend yourself.

However, vocational courses for those who wish to give their careers a shot in the arm, and those which provide a recognised qualification, account for only part of what's on offer to the night class enrollees for the 1998/99 session in Greater London. The non-vocational courses, which range from arts and crafts, covering painting, ceramics and writing, now count among their number an increasing amount of "al-

ternative" courses which offer an insight into the current obsessions of our culture. Still, night classes have always been about more than just straightforward off-the-job learning. In the accommodating world of the evening class, there has always been a place beside the functional for the sublime.

Take the creative writing class. A hugely popular option, creative writing classes offer a refuge for the misunderstood creative genius stifled by a harsh and insensitive world. The would-be writers who attend should benefit from the chance to read their work aloud, and get constructive criticism from the teacher and fellow students. Alas, many who attend are often thwarted in their attempts to improve because of the common presence of a certain type of character: Creative writing classes all too often seem to harbour the kind of writer who, despite flying in the face of the opinion of anyone who has ever come into contact with their work, believe that they possess a creative genius which the rest of the world is too blind to see. How, then, are the opinions of these people, so obviously at odds with the real world, going to help others improve their writing?

After the functional vocational courses, and the long-established arts courses, a fast growing sector of night classes are concerned with

pseudo-psychological "personal development". These courses are non-optional, concentrating on more ambiguous skills such as communication, understanding and relating. They are increasing in popularity and, despite offering no kind of qualification or final assessment,

To be identified as 'A Wounded Healer' and spend two days in shamanism rites starts to verge on the hippyish fads of Ab Fab's Edina

they are fully booked every year. Once a solely American phenomenon, the "personal development" class is now de rigueur in British FE colleges. Like the self-help book that other great American institution which has found favour this side of the Atlantic, personal development classes offer an array of solutions to problems you never knew you had. Did you, for example, ever find it difficult to "be in a group"? If so, hey presto! The

"Being in a Group" sessions offered by the City Literary Institute, one of the larger FE colleges, located in Covent Garden, promise to teach you precisely "how to be in a group", presumably by getting together with other people each week and sitting in a room.

Other courses include such treats as "The Wounded Healer", where those that have been "emotionally wounded" can turn it to their advantage with the help of a two-day class in which they will "explore themes of the wounded healer through the myth of Chiron and initiation rites of Shamanism".

While leafing through a self-help book in the privacy of your own bedroom may be a comforting and possibly useful diversion, if a bit naff, to identify yourself as "a wounded healer" and devote two days to indulging in the myth of Chiron and initiation rites of shamanism, in a college in Covent Garden, starts to verge on the kind of self-indulgent hippyish fads favoured by Ab Fab's Edina Monsoon.

But, of course, it's generally accepted that many people go to night classes just for the social life, and that the enrollees on courses such as "The Wounded Healer" are more interested in the company of other human beings than in mythical figures named Chiron. How much self-deception is required to convince

yourself that you'll learn something worthwhile on the "Wounded Healer" class, when what you're really trying to do is to avoid watching Police, Camera, Action! over a meal for one?

On scanning many of the non-vocational courses, it appears that all it takes to carve out a career running personal development evening classes is a nice line in psycho-babble. Some tutors would seem better suited to teaching "How to pull a fast one and get 25 people to shell out £30 on a night class, plus the cost of the course text, which happens to be written by you". Though some tutors' entrepreneurial skills may need more honing before they offer any more "Clown Skills" courses, like the one at the City Literary Institute, whose description sells a little too close to the tinfoil veiled pseu-downdown wind when it promises that "students can expect to learn an awareness of their own stupidity".

Who! What a vindictive streak has emerged. Perhaps a course on "Diffusing and Managing my Argumentative Streak" is called for, or possibly the "Anger, Pain and Creativity" class at the May Ward Centre, or even over to the Hounslow Adult Centre for "Choosing to Live Happily" because, at the end of the day, whatever problem or interest you can imagine, there's a night class somewhere about it.

A-Z OF EMPLOYERS

JOHN LAING

Age: 150.

History: The company's first headquarters were founded by James Laing in the Cumbrian village of Seberham, a site that was later taken over by the Salvation Army and is now used as a holiday home. During the 19th century the company was noted for its visionary schemes; it promoted pension and health provisions across the industry, and grew rapidly in the early part of this century when John Laing took the helm. In the Fifties and Sixties it became almost a national institution, with contracts to build parts of the M1 and reconstruct Coventry Cathedral. Although the company was hit by the recession more recently it has been leading the way with the Private Finance Initiative: projects include the new Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, the MoD's Joint Service Command and staff college, and an extension to

Manchester's Metrolink light railway. Other projects include the Greenwich Millennium Experience, the new Parliamentary buildings and Cardiff's millennium stadium.

Address: Around 120 people are based at the headquarters in Mill Hill, London. Offices around the UK include those in Hemel Hempstead, Birmingham, Newcastle and Manchester. Graduates work on sites all around the UK.

Ambience: "It's a dynamic, getting environment," says a spokesman, a comment that is belied by the Corporate Research Foundation, which found the company's employees to be on the whole, "industrious, family-oriented and non-controversial". The company's newspaper, Team Spirit, has been distributed since the early days; the company's own charitable trust helps with pensioners' heating bills; and the firm is known for its environmentally friendly policies.

Vital statistics: Annual turnover last year exceeded £1.4bn, with pre-tax profits of £32.2m. The group employs more than 6,500 people worldwide.

Lifestyle: Much internal promotion goes on, and secondments abroad have been a key feature for graduate employees. In the

past, graduates have been placed in Europe, the Far East, India and South Africa; there are also opportunities for self-starters to learn foreign languages. Employees who get sick are well looked after, with a permanent health scheme, and, amazingly, the company's thousands of ex-employee pensioners are visited every six months by the company's welfare officers.

Easy to get into? Laing currently recruits 50 to 60 graduates each year – mostly with degrees in civil engineering, building and quantity surveying – and sponsors another 40 or 50 at university; it has particularly strong links with Loughborough, Salford and UMIST. The company's remit includes construction across most industry sectors, including civil engineering, infrastructure operations, technical design and capital investment.

Glittering alumnus: Two construction bosses – John Armit, now chief executive of Costain, and Oliver Whitehead at Alfred McAlpine – previously headed up John Laing's civil engineering department.

Pay: Those working in the South-east start on £15,500; elsewhere, salaries are lower. There are twice-yearly reviews, and substantial mobility allowances – up to £25,000 a year. Senior staff get free Bupa care, and all employees benefit from a non-contributory pension scheme.

Training: Builders and quantity surveyors are put through a two-year scheme, leading to chartered status; for engineers, it's three years. There's also a learning network, where employees can ring in and order computer training packages.

Facilities: Staff at Mill Hill use the sports complex at nearby Elstree, including cricket, golf, football, bowls and tennis facilities. But, in time-honoured builders' fashion, you have to bring your own sandwiches to work – there are few canteens on site.

Who's the boss? The group's chairman is Sir Martin Laing, grandson of John Laing, who built up the company in the Twenties and Thirties. His deputy is Robert Wood.



Mee the boss: Sir Martin Laing is descended from the company's founder

Seeking a judgment on the value of work experience

Dear Help Desk
I AM a law graduate who has recently completed the Legal Practice Course and am applying for a training contract for 1999 or 2000. I have gained some practical legal experience during the Summer vacations and would like to know what else I should be doing between finishing the LPC and finding a suitable job, to enhance my prospects of gaining a training contract.

I understand that positions may be available with law firms during this gap, and I would like to know whether, in reality, this is the case. Also, does getting experience in one type of firm such as a legal aid practice as opposed to a commercial firm mean that my options would be more limited when it comes to applying for a training contract?

Jonathan White, Cambridge

Hina Malik, graduate recruitment manager, Stephenson Harwood (a major City law firm) says:

There are still some training contracts available for 1999 but as many law firms, especially in the City, recruit two years in advance, most will be recruiting for September 2000 at the present time. However, some firms will have under-recruited and so it is worth approaching Graduate Recruitment departments directly.

Refer to the Student Edition of the Chambers Guide to the Legal Profession for relevant names and addresses. Paralegal work between completing the LPC and finding a training contract can be useful experience to have on your CV and, sometimes, paralegal work can lead to the offer of a training contract.

Before accepting any offer, you should always enquire as to whether

the particular firm has a policy of recruiting paralegals as trainees. If you are interested in applying to City firms, it would be preferable to gain experience of commercial law. However, any kind of experience in the legal field is better than none and will show commitment to a career in the law. Good luck with your search!

Anil Shah, regional controller, HW Daniels Bates Legal recruitment consultants says:

Training contracts are increasingly difficult to obtain, so anything that will enhance the contents of your CV should increase your chances. Gaining experience with a law firm, as it appears you have done, is without

HELP DESK

YOUR CAREER PROBLEMS SOLVED

doubt one of the best ways to build relevant experience, particularly if you are able to work in one of the fields which currently suffer from skills shortages, such as residential conveyancing, tax (both private client and corporate) or personal injury (plaintiff and defendant RTA). Opportunities do exist with firms for individuals who possess a solid, if basic, level of experience in these areas. Also you will find that having the name of a major law firm on your CV can significantly increase your prospects of obtaining a training contract, especially if you hope to join a top tier firm. In order to get to this point flexibility is important. Just as you may have to relocate

to get a job with a good firm, you may have to consider doing the same in order to gain relevant experience.

This will also increase your chances of finding an opening with a firm during the gap period. It is important, however, to bear in mind that if you are looking to specialise in, for example, commercial law, you will find that experience in an unconnected area of law will not be of great value. In this case it is better to wait for a relevant opportunity.

With appropriate experience you will find law firms more willing to hear from you and more likely to offer you a training contract. This advice is equally relevant to people who have been unable to gain a training

contract the first time round, but are working as non-qualified fee earners in a legal environment.

James Clayton, trainee solicitor, Olswang says:

Although most law firms recruit their trainees two years in advance, their requirements often change in the interim period, so do not be put off chasing the personnel departments of the firms you are interested in to see if they are recruiting additional trainees for an intake which was previously full.

Otherwise, summer placements or any other form of work experience (even unpaid) are invaluable, since they present an ideal opportunity to get your foot in the door, and instead of having one interview to put your case, you get a window of 3-4 weeks. Obviously, it is preferable to ex-

perience the areas of law which interest you, but there is more to work experience; office life is not something for which the LPC prepares you for and any experience of the law in a practical environment is worthwhile. Ultimately there is a large amount of luck involved in finding a training contract (being in the right place at the right time, etc), as well as perseverance.

No one enjoys spending hours slaving over one application after another, but needs must when the devil drives. I was fortunate enough to start a placement at Olswang at a time when the firm was (and indeed still is) enjoying a period of considerable growth, and what started out as a three week summer placement became two months worth of work culminating in a training contract to take back to law school.

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Before you apply, make an honest assessment of your suitability to become a volunteer:

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Would you enjoy spending up to two years overseas?

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Are you the kind of person who thrives in an unfamiliar environment?

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Are you looking for a challenge where you will gain as much as you give?

Yes

Are you flexible and someone who values human relationships?

Yes

Are you entitled to unrestricted entry to the UK?

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Name Telephone

Address Postcode

Post to: Enquiries Unit, VSO, 317 Finsbury Bridge Road, London SW15 2PN. Tel: 0181 780 7500 (24 hours).

Website: <http://www.oneworld.org/vso>

Please quote ref: 1/G/2

Charity number 313751



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MBHA enables people in Scotland who have physical disabilities to obtain affordable and accessible housing.

MBHA provides over 1300 houses, with a mix of independent, sheltered and fully staffed supported developments, stretching from Stranraer to Wick.

MBHA campaigns for recognition of the housing and access needs of all people with disabilities throughout Scotland and provides a specialised design service to meet these needs.

If you feel that you match up, please write for further information to:

The Personnel Department,
 Margaret Blackwood Housing Association,
 Craigievar House, 77 Craigievar Brae,
 Edinburgh, EH12 9YL.
 Tel: 0131 517 7227.

The closing date for applications is 25th September 1998.

We wish to appoint a new Chief Executive who:

- has vision and a "Can Do" attitude;
- is a leader who brings out the best in people;
- is an experienced senior manager - a skilled negotiator with financial acumen;
- knows what people with physical disabilities want from housing;
- is alert to the socio-political climate affecting the voluntary sector.

A relevant professional qualification is desirable.

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TOUR OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

To work in a cheerful, exciting environment as part of a closely knit team for the production, development and operation of European tours for Japanese in its central London office.

Qualifications:- Fluent written and spoken Japanese
 Minimum 4 years experience in the travel industry
 Computer Literacy in Microsoft Office products
 High standard of written and spoken English

An ability to converse in another European language, knowledge of Galileo Focalpoint CRS system and familiarity with Japanese word processing and spreadsheet packages are desirable.

An attractive salary will be offered according to qualifications and experience plus a benefit package which includes travel discounts.

Please submit CV with covering handwritten letter to:

Administration Manager
 Nippon Travel Agency (Europe) Ltd
 Academy House
 161-167 Oxford Street
 London W1R 1TA



Fast Track presents the 2nd IT recruitment fair for companies who want to meet the cream of recent graduates, and young career-savvy IT executives with 1-3 years experience.

Previous exhibitors in 1998 include BT, Ernst & Young, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Mosaic Software, Kingsway Advertising, Winchester Search & Selection, General Electric and GEC-Marconi

Complement your recruitment advertising with a stand at this cost-effective and convenient fair. But hurry, there's only a limited number of stands available and they're booking fast!

Mark your diary.

Fast Track IT Recruitment Fair
 22nd October

Call St John Lewis now on 0171 293 2092 to discuss your requirements.

THE INDEPENDENT

OPERATION MANAGER

International Wedding Services seek experienced operations manager to develop European operations. Three years managerial experience in similar field required. Fluency in Japanese/English and one/two European languages essential.

Must excel in customer service.

Salary negotiable

Please fax C.V. with current salary details to

Simon Boaler, World Wedding Services Ltd

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Send CV to

171 Drury Lane, London WC2B 5QA

GENDAI TRAVEL LIMITED
 Urgently Require a Graduate Senior Sales Executive with minimum 3 years experience of sales and marketing.

Extensive knowledge of Korean/Asia Travel Routes,

Packaging, Hotel Facilities, must speak fluent

Korean, English and Japanese and be computer literate in Korean, English and Japanese.

DWN

NEW FILMS

HANDS (AKA PALMS) (PG)

Director: Arun Aristakyan
The director of this harrowing semi-documentary has been compared to Pasolini and Tarkovsky; the press notes assure us, but though this is an imaginatively realised rumination on the workings of the modern world, the picture is deadening in a way that those directors' best work never was. The film is simple and precise in its methods: as stages of downtrodden and forgotten citizens – amputees, beggars, the very young, the elderly – are played out before us in a moving collage, a man narrates a message to his unborn child, who may be being aborted even as he speaks.

West End: Renoir**HE GOT GAME (R)**

Director: Spike Lee
Starring: Denzel Washington, Ray Allen, Mills Jovovich
The plot of Spike Lee's muddled tale is pure poppycock: Jake Shuttleworth (Denzel Washington) is doing time for the murder of his wife, but is offered a deal that could cut short his sentence. It has come to the attention of the Governor that Jake's son, Jesus (Ray Allen), is the country's hottest new basketball star. If Jake can convince Jesus to sign with the Governor's alma mater, then he can look forward to an early release. Jake agrees, and is dispatched into the outside world on this errand. However, there is the seemingly insurmountable obstacle in Jake's path – his son has vowed never to forgive him for his mother's murder.

West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

THE LAND GIRLS (12)

Director: David Leland
Starring: Catherine McCormack, Rachel Weisz, Anna Friel, Steven Mackintosh
This gentle comedy from David Leland (director of *Wish You Were Here*) leads you into familiar territory, but manages to infuse the experience with warmth and wit. Rachel

Ryan Gilbey

GENERAL RELEASE

ARMAGEDDON (12)

This deeply stupid film purports to be a tender love story, a meaty action adventure and a global disaster movie in which a meteor is on a collision course with Earth. Its jumble of styles will end up pleasing no one. Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE AVENGERS (12)

Ralph Fiennes dons the bowler hat and wields the cane as Stede, Uma Thurman pours herself into a cat suit as Emma Peel, while Sean Connery sashays around in a kilt as August De Winter, who plans to take over the world by controlling the weather. **Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End**

BARNEY'S GREAT ADVENTURE (U)

Feature-length exploits for the big, jolly dinosaur whose blend of nursery rhymes, Day-glo colours and moral lessons make him ideal for the more unassuming pre-school viewer, an endurance test for anyone else. Rio Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

LE BOSSU (15)

Sumpuous swashbucklers are fast becoming French cinema's stock-in-trade. This effort doesn't break much new ground, but is acted and shot with such braggadocio that its lack of originality is never a problem. **ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Mayfair**

EVE'S BAYOU (15)

Rites-of-passage drama set in Louisiana locations which have been devoured by too many Southern Comfort ads. Despite some intuitive observations, this feels for the most part like reheated Fried Green Tomatoes. Odeon Mezzanine, Plaza, Virgin Trocadero

GADJO DLO (15)

A young Parisian journeys through rural Rwanda on a quest for the gypsy singer whose music he discovered through his father. There is a warmth and humour to the storytelling which pushes this film way beyond being mere sentimental travelogue. **Renoir**

GODZILLA (PG)

The team which cooked up such blockbusters as *Star Wars* and *Independence Day* is generally very adept at constructing enjoyable adventures with a B-movie taste for fun. Unfortunately, on this occasion their light touch has deserted them. Empire Leicester Square

THE HORSE WHISPERER (PG)

Robert Redford's over-long and deeply indulgent film of Nicholas Evans' novel is a textbook lesson in the narcissistic allure of cinema. Redford plays a Montana farmer who specializes in equine psychology. He agrees to help New York magazine editor Kristin Scott Thomas whose daughter has been traumatised into riding accident. **ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Chelsea Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road**

LOCK, STOCK & TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels follows the lead of Quentin Tarantino but the film's defining characteristic is its resilient morality. The picture is peopled by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy, who comes unstuck in a high-stakes card game, falls into the former, but Hatchet Harry, to whom he owes £500,000, is a dangerous old-school pro. ABC Tottenham Court Road, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

THE X FILES (15)

David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprise their roles as FBI agents Mulder and Scully and, for their first big-screen outing, get a meaty conundrum to chew on involving a shifty secret government and a deadly virus from outer space. Duchovny and Anderson are most engaging through little dialogue and even less facial movement; they manage to convey great tenderness.

ABC Baker Street, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

ZERO EFFECT (15)
Pleasing thriller starring Bill Pullman as Daryl Zero, the world's greatest private investigator; a drop-out who subsists on tuna fish, Tab and amphetamines, pulling on reserves of wit and ingenuity when the time comes to crack a new case. Ultimately, the film feels a little shallow and self-conscious, but it puts a smile on your face for most of its duration. Warner Village West End

Weisz, Anna Friel and Catherine McCormack are the "land girls" called upon in WWI to pick up the discarded ploughs and take the place of the farmers who have departed for war. Nothing surprising – sexual awakening, broad laughs, a smattering of tragedy – but nicely done.

West End: Screen on the Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO (15)

Director: Whit Stillman
Starring: Chloe Sevigny, Kate Beckinsale, Chris Eigeman
In the fictional club at the centre of Whit Stillman's dry and slightly sad comedy, everything sparkles – under the light from the glitterball, the dancers are united in their absent-minded beauty, and pockets of glitter fall from the ceiling even as the club is being busted by cops. But you couldn't accuse the picture of being nostalgic – as with Stillman's previous films (*Metropolitan* and *Barcelona*), actions and emotions unfold with a knowing wink toward the future.

West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Richmond Filmhouse, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

SPECIES II (18)

Director: Peter Medak
Starring: Michael Madsen, Natasha Henstridge, George Dzundza
Ludicrous science-fiction horror about a strand of deadly alien DNA carried back to Earth in the bodies of astronauts. Cornball dialogue and a healthy abundance of sex and violence make this passable B-movie fun.

West End: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

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West End: Screen on the Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

THE MAGIC SWORD: QUEST FOR CAMELOT (U)

The first full-length product of Warner's new animation division, this Arthurian adventure looks – and courtesy of the inevitable Celine Dion, sounds – even cheerier than the average Disney effort. But beneath the surface there's an edge of genuine weirdness that will keep parents entertained, if it doesn't frighten the children out of their wits. **Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End**

METROLAND (18)

Seventies suburban morality tale in which Christian Bale plays a man festering somewhere in the community because his oldest friend thinks that he ought to be out having fun. There are some endearing moments but, on the whole, director Phillip Saville shows a dispiriting lack of ambition.

ABC Piccadilly

THE NICE GUY (15)

This largely disappointing addition to Jackie Chan's oeuvre has its moments – a fight scene on a construction site is a particular delight. But the combination of comedy and adventure doesn't get it to be the first Chan film that wouldn't even look good if you were plastered. **Virgin Trocadero**

THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION (15)

Romantic comedy in which Paul Rudd confounds his flatmate Jennifer Aniston's dreams of wedding vows and joint burial plots by being gay. **West End: Odeon Mezzanine**

THE PROPOSITION (12)

Disraeli period drama in which feminist writer

Constance Shulman (Naomi Watts) falls in love with a man (Guy Pearce) who has sold her to a

rich landowner (Sam Neill). The two must now

survive a treacherous journey across the desert.

ABC Piccadilly

THE REAL HOWARD SPITZ (PG)

The Real Howard Spitz, a sunny comedy about a children's writer (Kelsey Grammer, aka Frasier) who hates children, is director Vadim Jean's most likable work. Originally may be thin on the ground but the direction is breezy and Grammer has a lovely, grouchy demeanour. **UCI Whiteleys**

THE SPANISH PRISONER (PG)

David Mamet's intricate little thriller is a playful exercise in twisting a plot until it locks; there is a scientific detachment about the way he explores every permutation of his Kafkaesque scenario, though the movie is also stily funny. **Barbican Screen, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End**

THE X FILES (15)

David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprise their roles as FBI agents Mulder and Scully and, for their first big-screen outing, get a meaty conundrum to chew on involving a shifty secret government and a deadly virus from outer space. Duchovny and Anderson are most engaging through little dialogue and even less facial movement; they manage to convey great tenderness.

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THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

Film Ryan Gilbey

I THINK THAT Ed Wood (left) suffers from the same flaws as most Tim Burton films: the nasty and entirely wonderful *Batman Returns* and *Mars Attacks!* excepted, of course. It's rather burdened by the director's affinity with his subject – in this case, the king of trash, B-movie director Edward D. Wood Jr. But the film is very sweet-natured, and blessed with some cherubic performances – in



the lead role, Johnny Depp; Martin Landau, who deservedly won an Oscar for his tragic portrayal of Bela Lugosi; and Bill Murray in a great cameo as a dumpy transsexual.

NFT, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-923 3232) 8.30pm

The Alan Clarke retrospective at the Edinburgh Film Festival was a terrific success, and now selections from it are appearing on the repertory circuit. Tonight, *The Firm*, his last film, and one of his fiercest, with Gary Oldman as an estate agent whose real love is soccer hooliganism.

ICA Cinematheque, London SW1 (0171-930 3647) 6.30pm, 8.30pm

Theatres Dominic Cavendish

DAVID HARE'S *The Blue Room*, boasting Nicole Kidman and Iain Glen, opens tonight at the Donmar, but has already sold out for its entire run. Why not take your custom elsewhere: now previewing is the 10th-anniversary

revival of *Timberlake Wertenbaker's Our Country's Good*. Following the trials of a company of officers and convicts attempting to stage Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* in Australia in 1787, it is an eloquent testament to the power of theatre.

Young Vic, London, SE1 (0171-928 6363) 7.30pm

Also worth a look-in is *Handbag*, the new one from Mark *Shopping and Fucking* Ravenhill (right), a "radical, contemporary" take on *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Lyric Studio, London W6 (0181-741 8701) 8pm

Art Richard Ingleby

THE SCULPTOR Gavin Turk started out by failing his degree at the Royal College with a final show that consisted of a solitary blue plaque on his studio wall stating: "Gavin Turk, sculptor, worked here 1989-91". These days such canny conceptualism would probably get him a first, but just seven years ago it was all a bit much for the folk in charge at Kensington Gore. Times have changed,

as has Turk's sculpture, and not necessarily for the better; though from tatty you can judge his recent work (above) for yourself. As the exhibition title hints – "Gavin Turk – the Stuff Show" – it shouldn't all be taken too seriously.

The South London Art Gallery, London SE5 (0171-702 6120)

Meanwhile, up at the Saatchi Gallery in St John's Wood, the grand patron of Turk and his pals is proving that his taste extends beyond the hippark with an exhibition show casting a new batch of 14 young Americans.

From today, 93a Boundary Road, London NW8 (0171-624 8299)

Classical Duncan Hadfield

THE WIGMORE HALL'S

new autumn season starts today in fine style with a visit from the distinguished soprano

Edith Mathis.

Still in glittering voice, Ms

Mathis is one of the finest exponents of

the Austro-Germanic lieder repertoire.

Joined at the piano by master

accompanist Graham Johnson,

the pair contribute to the Wigmore's ongoing

Schumann Series,

with a range of songs by him, as well as by

Beethoven and Hugo Wolf.

Wigmore Hall, London W1 (0171-935 2141) 7.30pm

Featured Pianist composer Karol

Szymanowski receives his final airing of the season via his enchanting

18/LISTINGS

ELSTON
ODEON (0181-315 4223) **Gants Hill Armageddon** 7.30pm Barney's Great Adventure 11.15pm Dr Dolittle 11.50am, 1.50pm, 3.50pm, 5.55pm The Horse Whisperer 12.40pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 12.10pm, 3pm, 5.30pm, 8.30pm Species II 2.10pm, 4.20pm, 6.30pm, 8.40pm The X-Files 12.10pm, 3pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm

KINGSTON
ABC OPTIONS (0870-9020409) BR: Kingston The Horse Whisperer 2.10pm, 7.20pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.05pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.25pm

MUSWELL HILL
ODEON (0181-315 4217) **Highgate Armageddon** 8.05pm Dr Dolittle 1.5pm, 2.55pm, 4.35pm, 6.15pm The Horse Whisperer 12.50pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot 12.20pm, 4.35pm, 7.25pm, 10.15pm Species II 5.15pm, 7.25pm, 9.30pm The X-Files 2.10pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm

PESCHAM
PREMIER (0181-235 3006) BR: Peckham Rye Armageddon 6pm, 9.05pm Dr Dolittle 1.45pm, 3.30pm, 5.30pm Godzilla 2.40pm, Game 3.30pm, 5.30pm, 8.10pm The Horse Whisperer 2.05pm, 5.25pm, 8.45pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 4.35pm, 7pm, 9.25pm Species II 5.15pm, 7.25pm, 9.30pm The X-Files 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm, 9.15pm

PURLEY
ABC (0870-9020407) BR: Purley Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 5.40pm, 8.30pm Species II 6.10pm, 8.35pm

PURNEY
ABC (0870-9020401) BR: Purney Bridge, BR: Purney The Horse Whisperer 12.45pm, 4.15pm, 7.40pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.15pm, 3pm, 5.45pm, 8.35pm

RICHMOND
ODEON (0181-315 4218) BR: Richmond The Horse Whisperer 1.05pm, 4.30pm, 8.10pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.05pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.30pm The Little Mermaid 1pm Lost In Space 8.30pm The Spanish Prisoner 3pm, 6.20pm, 9pm

RIMFORD
ODEON (0870-9020419) BR: Rimford Dr Dolittle 4.30pm, 6.25pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 2.10pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm Species II 1.55pm, 4.10pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm The X-Files 1.50pm, 8.20pm

ODEON LIBERTY 2 (01708-730409) BR: Stamford Armageddon 1.45pm, 4.50pm, 8.05pm Barney's Great Adventure 12.10pm Dr Dolittle 2pm, 4.10pm, 7pm The Land Girls 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.40pm, 9.20pm The Little Mermaid 1pm Lost In Space 8.30pm The Spanish Prisoner 3pm, 6.20pm, 9pm

ODEON LIBERTY 3 (01708-730410) BR: Stamford Armageddon 1.45pm, 4.50pm, 8.05pm Barney's Great Adventure 12.10pm Dr Dolittle 2pm, 4.10pm, 7pm The Land Girls 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.40pm, 9.20pm The Little Mermaid 1pm Lost In Space 8.30pm The Spanish Prisoner 3pm, 6.20pm, 9pm

SIDCUP
ABC (0541-555131) BR: Sidcup The Horse Whisperer 2.30pm, 7.40pm Species II 4.15pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

STAPLES CORNER
VIRGIN (0870-9070171) BR: Cricketon Armageddon 8.30pm Dr Dolittle 2pm, 4pm, 6pm Get Game 1.30pm, 4.45pm, 8.15pm The Horse Whisperer 1.10pm, 4.30pm, 8pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 2.20pm, 4.30pm, 7pm, 9.20pm Species II 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm The X-Files 3.15pm, 6.10pm, 9pm

STRATFORD
NEW STRATFORD PICTURE HOUSE (0181-555 3366) BR: Stratford East Dr Dolittle 1.30pm, 3.20pm He Got Game 2.15pm, 5.15pm, 8.30pm The Horse Whisperer 1.10pm, 4.35pm, 7.55pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm The X-Files 6.15pm, 8.45pm

STREAMHAM
ABC (0870-9020415) BR: Streamham Hill Armageddon 4.35pm, 7.45pm Dr Dolittle 1.45pm Eve's Bayou 8.30pm Lost In Space 1.30pm The Real Howard Splat 4.15pm, 6.35pm Species II 2pm, 4.45pm, 8pm The Little Mermaid 1.10pm, 4.15pm, 7pm, 9.20pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.40pm, 4.40pm, 8.10pm The X-Files 3.30pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm

SURREY QUAYS
UCI (0990-888950) **Surrey Quays** Avenue 1.10pm, 3pm, 5.15pm, 9.30pm Dr Dolittle 12.10pm, 2.15pm, 5.05pm, 8pm Godzilla 12.45pm, 4pm He Got Game 11.45am The Horse Whisperer 1.10pm, 4.35pm, 7.55pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.15pm, 4pm, 6.45pm, 8.45pm Species II 2.15pm, 4.45pm, 7pm The X-Files 3.30pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm

SUTTON
UCI 6 (0990-888950) BR: Sutton & Morden Armageddon 2.30pm, 5.45pm, 8pm Dr Dolittle 1.45pm, 3.45pm, 6.5pm The Horse Whisperer 1.30pm, 5pm Species II 1pm, 4.30pm, 8pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 4pm, 6.15pm, 8.35pm Species II 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm

TURNPIKE LANE
CORONET (0181-888 2519) BR: Turnpike Lane Dr Dolittle 3.40pm, 6pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 4pm, 6.15pm, 8.35pm Species II 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm

UXBRIDGE
ODEON (01895-813139) BR: Uxbridge The Horse Whisperer 12.45pm, 4.10pm, 7.45pm The X-Files 1.30pm, 5.30pm, 8.20pm

WALTHAMSTOW
ABC (0870-9020424) **Walthamstow Central Dr Dolittle 4pm, 6pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 5.25pm, 8.25pm Species II 2.05pm, 4.10pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm The X-Files 1.30pm, 8.05pm**

WALTON ON THAMES
THE SCREEN AT WALTON (01932-252825) BR: Walton On Thames The Horse Whisperer 4.15pm, 7.40pm The Land Girls 3.10pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

WELL HALL
CORONET (0181-850 3351) BR: Ethan Dr Dolittle phone for times Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 6.15pm, 8.35pm

WIMBLEDON
ODEON (0181-315 4222) BR/W: Wimbledon **South Wimbledon Armageddon** 8pm Dr Dolittle 11.20am, 1.20pm, 3.20pm, 5.20pm The Horse Whisperer 1pm, 4.15pm, 7.45pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.30pm, 3.35pm, 6.15pm, 8.35pm Species II 1.40pm, 3.45pm, 6.25pm, 8.45pm The X-Files 2.50pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm

WIMBLEDON
ART STAGE (0171-369 1736) BR: George Wendt in Yasmina Reza's comedy about art and friendship Wyndham's Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-369 1736/65 867 1111) Leic Sq. Tue-Sat 8pm, [4] 3pm, 7pm, 11.15pm, £9.50-£27.50, previews 9.30pm

WIMBLEDON
SHAKESPEARE'S Richard III may not be historically accurate, but it is very popular with actors and audiences alike. Among those who have queued up to play the deformed and evil villain in the past are theatrical giants such as John Barrymore and Laurence Olivier. Now it's the turn of Robert Lindsay (right) to don the hunchback Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire (01789 295623) from 27 Oct to 14 Nov

THEATRE WEST END

Ticket availability details are for today, times and prices for the week running times include interval. Seats at all prices - Seats at some prices O - Seats only Matinee [1] Sat, [3] Tue, [4] Wed, [5] Thu, [6] Fri, [7] Sat

ALARMS & EXCURSIONS
Michael Frayn's new comedy about a dinner party which is interrupted by mysterious messages stars Felicity Kendal and Josie Lawrence. Gielgud Theatre, Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5065) **Piccadilly Circus**, Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5][7] 3pm, £19.50-£27.50, previews 9.30pm

MISS SANGOM Musical which re-tells the Modem Butterfly tragedy to Vietnam. Theatre Royal, Drury Lane Catherine Street, WC2 (0171-836 1443) **Covent Garden**, Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [4][7] 3pm, £17.50-£25.165 mins.

OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD Study of the civilising power of language, written by Timberlake Wertenbaker and performed by Out Of Joint Young Vic The Cut, SE1 (0171-532 6333) **Bravo Wardrobe**, Mon-Sat 8pm, 10pm, £20.50, 17.2pm, ends 24 Oct, £17.50-£22.50.

PEONY FAVILION Classic 18th-century Chinese epic music drama, directed by Peter Sellars. Barbican Centre, EC2 (0171-638 8891) **Barbican/Moonlight**, Mon-Sat 6.30pm, ends 20 Sept, £10-£27.50.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Lavish family musical based on Disney's computer version of the favorite fairytale. Garrick Theatre, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-369 1736/65 867 1111) Leic Sq. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [4][7] 3pm, £22.50-£29.50.

WOODFORDE ABC (0181-989 3463) **South Woodford** The Horse Whisperer 12.40pm, 4.05pm, 7.30pm Species II 2.10pm, 4.20pm, 6.30pm, 8.40pm

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's long-awaited Liverpool musical, starring Phoenix Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-369 1736/65 867 1111) Leic Sq. Tue-Sat 8pm, [4] 3pm, £19.50-£25.165 mins.

BLUE ROOM Nicole Kidman stars in David Hare's adaptation of Schindler's *La Ronde*. Donmar Warehouse, Earhart Street, WC2 (0171-369 1732) **Covent Garden**, Mon-Sat 8pm, £12-£25.150 mins.

REAL INSPECTOR HOUND Double bill of drama from Tom Stoppard and Peter Schaffer, directed by Gregory Doran. Comedy Theatre, WC2 (0171-369 1732) **Covent Garden**, Mon-Sat 8pm, [4] 3pm, £17.50-£22.50.

RENT Musical bi-lobby tracing the brief life of Buddy Holly. Sadler's Wells, WC2 (0171-369 1732) **Lyric Hammersmith**, Mon-Sat 8pm, £12.50-£15.165 mins.

RENT Musical inspired by La Bohème and set in modern day New York. Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2 (0171-369 1732) **Waterloo**, Mon-Sat 8pm, £12.50-£15.165 mins.

REAL INSPECTOR HOUND & COMEDY Double bill of drama from Tom Stoppard and Peter Schaffer, directed by Gregory Doran. Comedy Theatre, WC2 (0171-369 1732) **Covent Garden**, Mon-Sat 8pm, £12.50-£15.165 mins.

RENT Musical inspired by La Bohème and set in modern day New York. Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2 (0171-369 1732) **Waterloo**, Mon-Sat 8pm, £12.50-£15.165 mins.

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